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COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE®

kp

FEBRUARY 7, 2003 #1525

a Krause Publication

A STITCH IN SPANDEX SAVES...?
Mr. Silver Age sews up a DC costume quiz! Page 30!

We're already in line for this summer's blockbusters!

Mickey's protected

In a 7-2 decision announced Jan. 15, the Supreme Court upheld longstanding copyrights designed to protect the profits from cartoon characters, books, songs, comics, and other copyrighted material. The decision is a major victory for such companies as Disney and AOL Time Warner and a bonus for creators who retained their copyrights to material created after 1927.

Had the outcome been different, the doors would have been opened for those who wanted to release for general public consumption material created between the two world wars. (Under the law that prevailed during those works' creations, copyright was in effect for 28 years, renewable for another 28; material created in 1946 would now have been available for reprint without royalty payment.)

At risk of expiration was Disney's 1928 film featuring the character that would become Mickey Mouse, "Steamboat Willie." Also at risk of expiration for AOL Time Warner were such films as 1942's *Casablanca* and 1939's *The Wizard of Oz* and *Gone with the Wind*. ✦

THE A LIST

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The Filth #7
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CURRENT COMICS

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Visit www.comicsbuyersguide.com

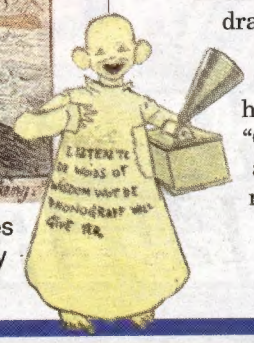
COMIC-STRIP GENESIS

cover story

COMICS WERE "TALKING" LONG BEFORE THE YELLOW KID

Billy in the Devil's claws. THE TABLES TURNED. Billy smoking the Devil packing.

R.A. Outcault's Yellow Kid was preceded by nearly a decade by such pieces of sequential art with word balloons as this Napoleonic era cartoon by British cartoonist James Gillray, published March 4, 1797.



While most comics historians have regarded R.A. Outcault's *Yellow Kid*, first published in 1896, as the first true comic strip, researcher and comics creator Doug Wheeler has uncovered dozens of examples of earlier comic strips that combined words and pictures in sequential order to tell their tale.

In the century prior to The Yellow Kid and his written-on nightshirt's first appearance in *The Yellow Kid and His New Phonograph* on Oct. 25, 1896, cartoonists both in America and abroad combined words and pictures in a multi-panel presentation to make their point.

Wheeler has been working on the project for more than eight years, gathering enough examples to demonstrate that The Yellow Kid wasn't the first comic strip. Wheeler's preview of a major work in preparation focuses on these 18th and 19th century examples, and he told ***CBG*** that even the dozens of examples he's uncovered are "merely a fraction of such examples not yet rediscovered."

In addition to showing that the combination of drawn pictures and text occurred much earlier than 1896, Wheeler argued against the contention that a comic strip had to have continuing characters, saying, "Characters are story elements, the same as plot and dialogue; they are *not* the medium in which that story is told."

Preview Wheeler's work on **Page 34!**

This issue was shipped January 20

COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE'S CGC INDEX

For complete coverage see page 43

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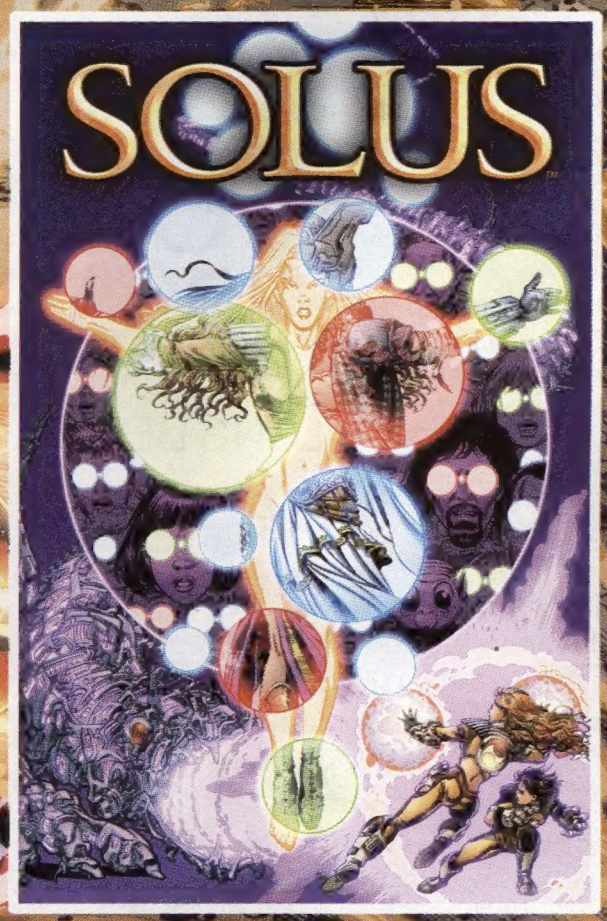

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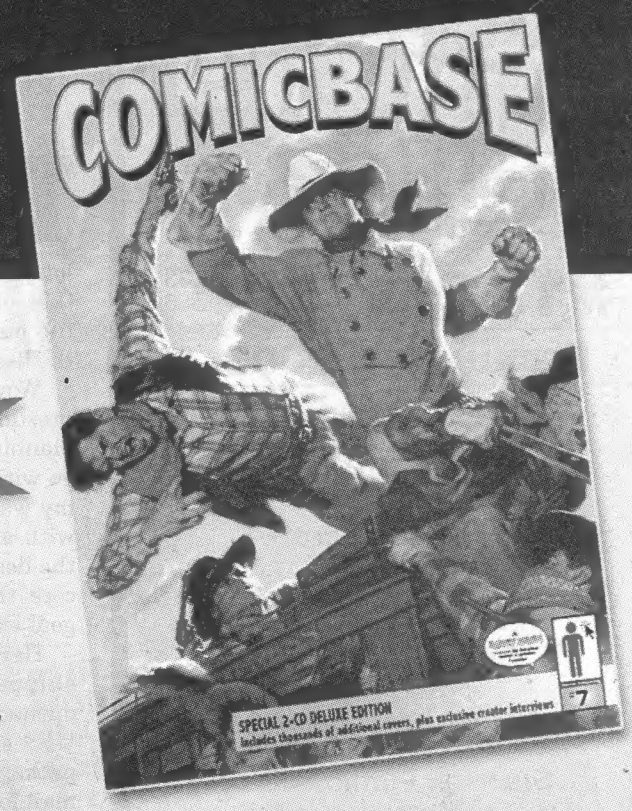

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#1525

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EDITORIAL

Wah! Wah! Want it *now*!

Use patience as well as a credit card after the auction

Maggie **Thompson**

Two newspaper-daily originals by one of my favorite comic-strip artists, Gus Arriola, were sitting in the Heritage Auction, while lots all around them were out of my price range. (Lesson One: Don't figure everything in a high-profile auction is automatically unobtainable.) What the heck? Why not give it a whirl?

Wow! I got *both* lots at *great* prices, when I'd presumed that, at best, I'd only get one. I waited, planning how I'd dress up the two *Gordo* dailies to go with the Sunday *Gordo* already framed and on my wall. It was in a black frame, matted with red board with a black core. I'd have my favorite frame shop echo the design: One strip would get a yellow mat with a black core; the other would get a blue mat with a black core. My goal was set. I had only to wait.

Heritage e-mailed me to say the package had been shipped, and here was the UPS tracking number! I opened each day tracking the package — and then the UPS site said it had been delivered. But there was no package. I waited a day.. No package. The UPS site had e-mail for damaged packages but not for lost ones. I filled it with my address as the site of the "damaged" package noting I didn't have it *at all*. UPS e-mailed me back to say it had been delivered — to a different house on the street (despite its own note as to destination). Argh! But a walk down the block finally put it in my hands only a day late. And *what* a thrill: The art was incredibly well packed, protected in a Mylar sleeve that had been securely taped to Masonite board and then covered with another Masonite board tightly bound and (correctly) labeled. I don't think the art could have been damaged, had a car run over it.

So it was off to the frame shop. It's staffed by a father and son team (the father used to work for Western Printing & Lithographing, just for a comics kicker) who devote themselves to careful handling and effective displays. The blue was fine — but there wasn't a bright yellow mat with a black core! I dithered through every black-core mat. I considered re-matting the Sunday. Then it occurred to the three of us: double-mat the dailies with a black interior for the same effect. Now I wait. Be patient, Maggie.

More lessons learned:

- If your interests are wide enough, you can find delightful bargains.
- The sooner you try to solve a problem, the sooner it's resolved.
- The Internet, for all its flaws, can be used for problem-solving.
- When you deal with good companies, chances are you'll end up very happy with the results. ✦

LETTERS

Letters **To The Editor**

VISIT THE MESKIN SITE

Ger Apeldoorn
Delftlaan 169
2023 LE Haarlem
The Netherlands

As far as I can see, no one has yet written anything about the fact that Marvel seems to have switched its style of lettering in November last year from all-capital letters, common to comic books, to the more legible lower-case-plus-capitals style "normal" books use.

The change seems to be across the board, yet the Marvel leadership has not made any announcement for it. Which is odd, because the move will probably be applauded by most educators. For years now, they have said that the all-capitals style of lettering used in comics is hard to read for young children and remains hard to read for anyone suffering from dyslexia. Have they done some sort of research that told them they would sell more comics this way? Anyway, I applaud it and I hope someone (maybe one of the letterers whose jobs are affected by this move, so they must have been informed in some way) will tell us about the reasons for doing this ... and the reason to stay quiet about it.

Has everyone seen the magnificent website the children of Mort Meskin made about their father? They used to be on *www.mortmeskin.com*; now, they can be found at *www.mortmeskin.net*. It is not only a great website about a great artist from the past, highlighting every period of his work in easy-to-read pages, it is also a model for anyone who wants to do an appreciation site for any artist. In fact, I think it is *so* well done, I nominate it for whatever category is applicable for this sort of thing at the next San Diego convention. You really have to take a look at this site. Everything about it is appealing, as the song goes. There is a written, as well as a photographic, history of Mort Meskin, covering all of his career from his early days at DC and other companies, through his '50s period at the Simon and Kirby studio, to his later work for DC and in advertising.

There is a section about his advertising work, an art gallery with art from every period of his work, including his unknown work as a pulp illustrator, his period as an advertising artist, and paintings and drawings he did for himself later in life. There is a section about his influences and a special section about George Roussos, who was a good friend of the family and a frequent Meskin

CBG OTHER OPINIONS

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inker. Never have I seen a website about one artist that is so complete, yet so easy to maneuver through and so much fun to read. It is clearly a labor of love. They don't even offer original art for sale.

I hope they keep it up for a long time; maybe it will lead to some sort of reprint book from DC or any one of those companies he did such marvelous work for over the years. Visit the site and tell your friends.

Maggie: *While Marvel didn't make a big deal about its mixed-case lettering,* ***CBG*** *has featured occasional discussions and provided a sample comparing Golden Age mixed-case lettering with Marvel's current use.*

DON'T DISPLAY COMICS

Howard Zimmerman

Please inform Dan Long (***CBG*** #1523) that he is in the process of bleaching the reds out of every item he puts up on window display. Years ago, I had a spinner rack (yes, in my living room) on which I placed a whole bunch of #1s. Three months later, I decided to re-rack them with others and found their collectible values slashed to almost nil by sun-bleaching.

Also, I am stunned by the quote from Axel Alonso, in reference to Peter and Mary Jane having their current issues resolved: "The moment Peter and MJ find true happiness — with each other or without — the story's over."

Life is just not like that. The moment anyone finds true happiness is just that: one moment of true happiness.

Unfortunately, true happiness is not a continual state of being, but, rather, an epiphanic moment. Everyone needs more than a few moments of true happiness in his or her life, if only to make the rest of it bearable.

Maggie: *It is possible to minimize bleaching by mounting in ultra-violet-ray-blocking material.*

However, it's always best to limit a collectible's exposure to light.

BOB LAYTON OFFER

Athos Bousvaros
8 Frances Rd.
Lexington, MA 02421

As ***CBG*** has stated, longtime comics creator Bob Layton has founded a new company, Future Comics, with Dick Giordano and David Michelinie. *Freemind* is his first title.

Since Bob is one of my favorite creators, I decided to support his venture by ordering 100 copies of *Freemind* #1. Bob kindly threw in some variant editions, copies of #0, and signed 10 of these books. I would like to give these comic books to fans who would like to give Future Comics a try.

I hope if fans like the comics, they will encourage your retailer to order the book. If any ***CBG*** reader would like to receive a copy of this book, e-mail me or snail-mail me the answer to the following question:

What is your favorite Bob Layton comic book and why?

or

If you haven't read a Bob Layton comic book, why would you like to try this one?

(50 words or less)

Then e-mail me your postal address to *athos.bousvaros@verizon.net*, and I will send you a copy. I will send the signed copies out at random.

A few disclaimers:

1. I don't work for Bob Layton or Future Comics. I'm just a fan. Your name won't go on any mailing lists. If you want to get on the Future Comics mailing list, its website is *www.futurecomicsonline.com*.

2. The material in the book is about PG level, but, in your e-mail, please indicate either that you are over 18 or that you have obtained parental permission to receive the comic.

3. Give me a couple of weeks to send these out — I will be mailing them and paying for postage myself.

4. One copy per person or address, please.

5. If you were already planning to buy this book, go buy it. I'd like to give these out to fans less familiar with Bob or his work.

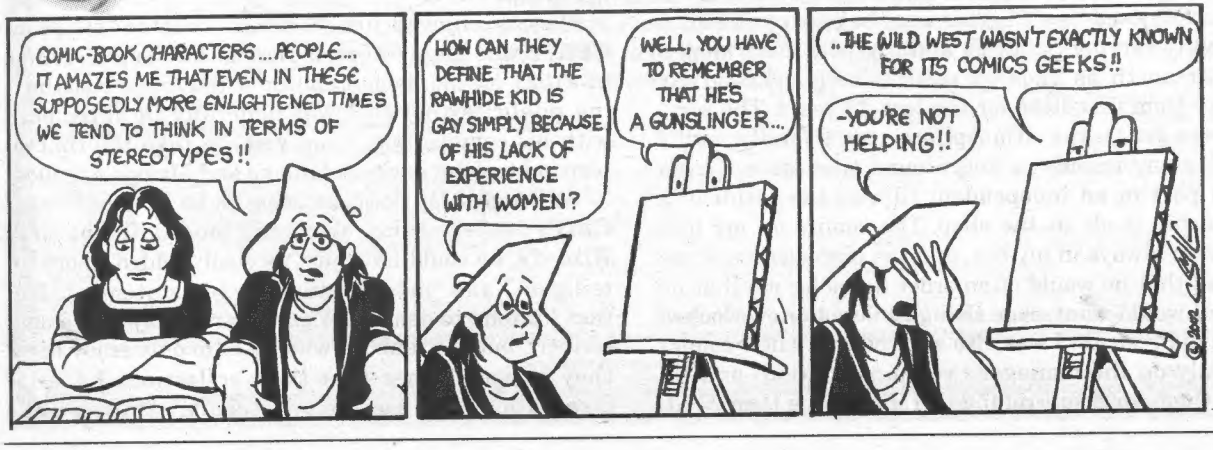
6. I'll e-mail people when I run out of comics. It'll be around the 120th person.

This is my small way of doing something for the industry and community.

Maggie: *Just a bit more background on Layton: He wrote many Marvel comics during the 1980s, including* ***Iron Man***, ***Hercules***, ***Power Man***, *and* ***Thor***.

He was one of the big contributors to the Valiant universe, writing issues of ***Magnus***, ***Doctor Mirage***, ***Solar***, *and* ***X-O Manowar***. *That's hardly a complete list, but you get the idea.*

CBG FOR ART'S SAKE by Chris Smigliano


COMIC-BOOK CHARACTERS... PEOPLE... IT AMAZES ME THAT EVEN IN THESE SUPPOSEDLY MORE ENLIGHTENED TIMES WE TEND TO THINK IN TERMS OF STEREOTYPES!!
HOW CAN THEY DEFINE THAT THE RAWHIDE KID IS GAY SIMPLY BECAUSE OF HIS LACK OF EXPERIENCE WITH WOMEN?
WELL, YOU HAVE TO REMEMBER THAT HE'S A GUNSLINGER...
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WHO ARE YOU--?

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I ENTER THE PUBLISHER'S AND FIND MY IMAGINATION WAS LESS THAN ACCURATE.
IF THERE ARE ANY DREAMS KEPT HERE, THEY ARE WELL HIDDEN.
IT TAKES SOME TIME TO GET ANYONE'S ATTENTION.
BUT FINALLY, A COMMITTEE OF EDITORS APPEARS TO HEAR ME OUT.
THEY TOO ARE NOT WHAT I EXPECTED.
CONTINUED...

ENOUGH OF A SHOWCASE

Dennis Yee
418 Camelback
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

I told myself that I wouldn't write a letter to ***CBG*** unless I had something positive or constructive to contribute, but I've had enough. I appreciate the generosity your editorial staff has shown Brian Douglas Ahern. I appreciate the fact that he looks to be a competent artist who you are giving exposure. Now he can use your periodical to showcase his realistic drawing skills and increase his chances of getting a job in mainstream comics.

I appreciate that the sentiments he expresses are common among a lot of comics fans who aspire to work in the comics profession. But this particular strip has run on way too long! It's not funny, insightful, or interesting. You've had some whiny and self-indulgent contributions featured in the past, but this one wins the grand prize. I'm paying good money for your periodical. Tell Ahern to indulge himself on his own dime.

LOOKING FORWARD EVERY WEEK

Dale Martin
P.O. Box 442612
Lawrence, KS 66044

I wanted to share with you this message that I recently sent to Brian Douglas Ahern:

I wanted to drop you a line to let you know how much I've been enjoying your recent "Who are you ..." strips in ***CBG***. From the "What I'm doing is thinking about giving it up" strip, I've been eagerly following where you're going with this – is this a swan song? Is it a chance to recharge you batteries? Is it the beginning of a long-term change in "Who are you ..."? I'm not sure, but I'm hooked!

I think your transition from "gag" strips to this series (both in terms of art and in terms of tone) has been surprisingly successful. While I know it can be difficult to keep momentum on a long arc in a weekly strip, I (for one) have had no problem remembering where the previous strip left off and getting right into the new strip.

Keep up the good work on this, and I hope you're getting lots of positive response from it.

He suggested I let his editors know my opinion about this, which is why I'm passing it along. It has been something to look forward to as I read my ***CBG*** each week. Thanks for giving him the chance to make the change from the "gag" format into something more challenging, both (I imagine) to him as a creator and me as a reader.

On a more general note, I enjoy a lot of things in your publication: I like the hefty letters section (with long, well-reasoned letters, not just short snippets) — especially the recent letters on "customer service." The reviews are helpful and have encouraged me to spend money on titles I hadn't really paid attention to in the past. Favorite columns include Mr. Silver Age's recent "Bronze Age" articles, as well as Chuck Rozanski's comics and Internet columns. I also get a real kick out of Brent's "Retro-Views" highlighting older comics.

Maggie: *We especially appreciate input on the comic strips we run, in part because we so seldom get reader response to them.*

IT'S GONE

Brian Rempel
2442 Cerrillos Rd., #208
Santa Fe, NM 87505

This letter is in response to a comment made in ***CBG*** #1522 by Chuck Rozanski in his "Tales from the Database." In the article he says, "Just last week I heard a rumor that the last direct-market comics store in Santa Fe, N.M., was closing. Santa Fe is not a large or populous market area, but there has been a comics shop in that town for more than 20 years. What is wrong with this picture?"

I am confirming that the 22-year-old comics shop in Santa Fe closed Dec. 31. This was the only comics shop currently serving Santa Fe and northern New Mexico (as far north as Taos by mail). I've purchased my comics from this store for the last 22 years. The service was great, the atmosphere was friendly, and I made many friends in and around that store. I even got a part in an independent film as the result of a friendship made at the shop. The comics on my pull list were always in my box, and the manager knew me so well that he would often order items for me that he knew I would want, even though I forgot or overlooked them in *Previews*. I was also allowed to try new comics (usually on the manager's recommendation) and return them for a full refund, if I didn't like them. I always liked the comics I was encouraged to try; that's how well Chris (the manager) knew me.

As a teen-ager, I got my first job working in that store. Peggy (the owner) had a heart of gold. She had a concern for me (and other teen-age patrons and employees) that extended far beyond a business relationship. She encouraged us when we had problems in school and even offered to pay for any class I wanted to take at the local community collage in an attempt to stimulate my growth into adulthood. Peggy still owns and operates the local used-paperback-book store, Book Mountain. While I'm glad that Peggy will still be accessible through the book store, it saddens me that she can no longer make enough money at the comics store to keep it open. With 100,000+ people in the Santa Fe area, it baffles me that there weren't enough customers to support a single comics store.

That's enough from me. Now that I have to drive a 120-mile round trip to buy my comics in Albuquerque (I can't stand the idea of mail-order comics), I don't have as much time as I used to for things like writing letters to my favorite comic-book news publication.

Maggie: *He attached a scan of the article that ran in the local paper,* ***The New Mexican****, concerning the history of the last comic-book store in northern New Mexico.*

A COUPLE OF HOURS VS. 20 MINUTES

Howard E. Michaels Jr.
706 North Cottage Rd.
Mercer, PA 16137

Having enjoyed his "Birdbun Theatre" strips in ***CBG***, I was happy to read Dennis Tucker's discourse in #1521 on the demographics of the comic-book-buying public. Although I was generally in agreement with his commentary, I did want to take the time to respond to John Jackson Miller's and Maggie's replies.

Although JJM does not seem to be in doubt about ***CBG***'s readers being older and more affluent than *Wizard*'s, he could have just as easily added "more intelligent" and "more mature" to his statement. Not that I intend to demean *Wizard* in any way (I'm a subscriber), but the fanboys who seem to only enjoy life if they happen to see that their collections have increased in value every four weeks are probably the

type of readers that ***CBG*** is better off without. And if my saying that I subscribe merely for the many interesting articles and actual news items sounds like someone saying that he subscribes to *Playboy* for the reading material, so be it. The single word that I would consider changing in Maggie's reply would be the last one. But changing "buyers" to "readers" might not say what she was trying to.

Both David Matteini and Dan Long brought up interesting points in their letters. While I can easily recall when DC had "Still only 20¢" on its covers, I also wonder why most of the comics produced these days are priced so very high. Although the titles from Archie Comics are currently priced at $2.19, and DC and Marvel still offer a few of their titles at $2.25, most of the comics offered every month are much closer to $3 (or more). With an actual prose novel available in paperback format only being around $6 or $7 and offering several hours' worth of escapism versus the 10 or 20 minutes of mindless brawling, blood, and breasts that one might get from any random comic book picked up and usually priced close to $3 or more, is it any wonder why the next generation of comic-book readers and collectors doesn't seem to be there as we were?

And, like Dan Long, I am all for a prestige or TPB collection reprinting the two issues of DC's *Cancelled Comics Cavalcade*. Especially since I remember enjoying a series or two that supposedly ended up there. (And my sincere opinion on the current allocation process is not suitable for publication.)

Maggie: *The time may be ripe for* ***Cancelled Comics Cavalcade****, but my guess is that such a project would only be financially practical if introduced in hardcover, black-and-white format at a pretty high price point. DC pays its contributors for reprints, and the volumes contained a* ***lot*** *of material.*

BE A REAL HERO!

Rik Livingston
Whitney Young CDC
100 Whitney Young Cir.
San Francisco, CA 94124

I'd like to add my thanks to those of Jeff Dyer, who wrote in ***CBG*** #1520, to thank Tom Crunkle of Atlanta for sending comics to the school where Dyer teaches. Crunkle has also been sending comics to The Whitney Young Child Development Center, where I teach a cartooning class! Every so often we get a manila envelope in the mail from the generous donor. It's always got drawing instruction books or comics like Archie, Walt Disney, Marvel, and DC heroes, *etc.* — all perfect for the age groups I'm teaching! It's gotten to the point now that, whenever I walk into the classroom with *any* manila envelope, cheers go up from the children. They know it usually means some great new reading adventure.

So who *is* this altruistic Tom Crunkle who spreads his good deeds from Dubuque to San Francisco? I think we've got a *real* mystery hero in our midst, folks!

Also on the topic of kids and comics, I'd like to respond to a recent editorial about grocery stores not carrying comics. The kids I teach have a hard time getting their busy parents to take them to a comics store, but, if comics were sold in the places the parents already frequent, chances are good that these future fans would walk out to the parking lot clutching the latest *Justice League Adventures*.

Although we have some great comics stores in San Francisco where I buy most of my reading, to encourage my local Safeway grocery stores to carry comics, I have been buying just a couple of my mainstream monthlies when I buy food. (They seem to have no problem with the fact that I put them in a vegetable baggie so it arrives home unstained.)

At first, only one of my neighborhood grocery stores carried comics, but, by filling out a customer feedback card, I cajoled the second nearby mart to fulfill this customer's needs. They even called and asked me which titles I thought would be good ones to stock!

Besides promoting a future readership for a great American art form, I firmly believe we need to do everything possible to get the next generation's minds and imaginations exercised in preparation for what are sure to be interesting years ahead. And, if there is one thing that we know comics demonstrate plenty of, it's imagination.

If you'd like to be a real hero (like the aforementioned Crunkle), promote the good thing that has helped you. And, if you have *any* comics to spare, I sure know some kids, at the address above, who could use them.

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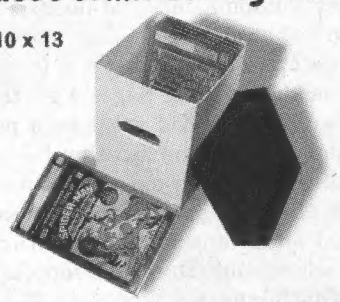

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THE WHEEL OF ENDINGS

Chris Juricich
1808 Chestnut St.
Berkeley CA 94702

Heidi MacDonald (***CBG*** #1521) is probably an astute reader — from her experience on the electronic end of media entertainment, she's been able to gather storylines in moments based on the predictability of the "wheel of endings" approach to what passes for popular literature. Rife, she feels, is the mundaneness of what passes for fiction these days on TV and in films. I certainly concur that many TV plotlines are too easy to scry from nary a minute's immersion into the half hour or hour.

That sitcom plotlines are predictable may also be obvious, but it's not the tale so much as how it's told — we're there for yocks, folks, so I'd advise Heidi to enjoy her "busman's holiday" as an ex-editor and at least appreciate the humor! Nonetheless, her disdain for the wasteland of mainstream TV is understandable — there's a lot of dreck out there. Wasn't it Marshall McLuhan who said that 90% of literature is crap and 10% is destined for some measure of historical notoriety and acceptance as capital "L" *Lit-rachah*?

We're talking about funnybooks, and the ratio probably applies as readily. I might choose to read a big passel of *Punisher War Journal* but, really, I have no expectations of greatness — just a bit of fun and some time to pass. Done once and over, the current *Punisher* series, eclectic though it may be, is hardly any different. The comics medium isn't inherently better than the TV world — it's hardly different, I'd surmise. And as for television, she admits to her hidden joys of *The Osbournes, The Simpsons*, and *Malcolm in the Middle.* I'd casually lump them together as entertaining but not compelling enough that I have to see them every week. For me it's *West Wing*, so I join the group of folks who fancy themselves as intellectuals.

There's a good deal of good TV out there that might be able to sneak past your sensitive editorial antennae — *West Wing* often supplying twists or unexpected character development — not to mention cool storytelling devices not regularly seen. There's no surfeit of happy endings on that show, much less *Boomtown*, another show I've enjoyed . Oh, and so as to allow that not all my viewing choices are unduly influenced by the heady reviews of NPR, my wife and I admittedly enjoy that silly melodrama *Everwood* — a soap opera to beat all soaps, even *Legion of Super-heroes*.

The Wheel of Endings isn't a universal writer's tool on network TV — and I'm no major proponent of TV as first-choice entertainment in any incarnation. Open your eyes to the possibilities!

Maggie: *You're thinking of Theodore Sturgeon, not Marshall McLuhan (of* ***The Medium Is the Massage****). When a World SF Con attendee complained in a question-and-answer session with the writer, "90% of science fiction is crud," Sturgeon responded, "90% of* ***everything*** *is crud." That has become known as Sturgeon's Law. And he did use the word "crud," nothing stronger; it was a more genteel time.*

APPLAUDING MARVEL

Matt Solberg
5047 N. 16th Ave, #2
Phoenix, AZ 85015

I'd like to applaud Marvel's decision to make The Rawhide Kid gay, if for no other reason than that no one else is thanking Marvel. I agree that the main point is a marketing ploy — a tough one at that, but one that could pay off dividends.

Marvel, I'm sure, is hoping that this new direction will cause curiosity among current comics buyers and act as an opening for those who are interested by the subject matter but are not current comics buyers. (I should note that I even read the press announcement in a local gay entertainment newspaper in the Phoenix area.) This is a tough marketing strategy, because it ultimately comes down to the story of The Rawhide Kid. Too campy, too stereotypical, and your new gay or interested reader will turn away from it. Too campy, too stereotypical, and your longtime reader will say it is of no interest to him or her.

I find this new direction to be a shot of fresh air in an industry and from a company built mainly of super-hero characters. The storytelling possibilities are elaborate and complex, if done right. Of all professions and occupations, the one that is viewed as the most masculine — and, thus, the most heterosexual — is that of the cowboy. The cowboy is a rugged individual, one who exemplifies all that it is to "be a man" in society. Now, Marvel has an opportunity to tell stories of how a young gay cowboy deals with those assumptions and stereotypes as well as how those around him deal with the knowledge of his being gay. How does The Rawhide Kid answer the question, "Only two things come from Texas: steers and queers. Which one are you?" and how does he handle those who think of him as less a man because of whom he loves?

I've been surprised by fan reaction, mainly within these pages, to Marvel's announcement. To a fault most letters written to ***CBG*** have questioned the need to "sexualize a character and series that had none to start with." Being heterosexual, bisexual, or homosexual is not an action. "Practicing homosexual" is a misnomer, since one can be gay without having sex or can be straight and have sex with members of the same gender. (And I'm sure that most teen-agers today would love to be a practicing hetero or homosexual, if the emphasis was on practicing.) One's sexuality is innate; it's emotion, feelings, and the spark that causes action. Coming out of the closet is more an acceptance of being gay and less a realization that one is gay. The Rawhide Kid is no different today than he was before. It's just that now we know he is gay, and if in the new series he pines for some cute red-headed boy, well, I don't know how that sexualizes him more than Peter Parker pines for Mary Jane.

From the reaction in these pages, I get the sarcastic sense that The Rawhide Kid must be a popular and beloved character despite the fact that he has been little used and little known for most of the past 20 years. I wonder if, in the process of Marvel revealing something personal about one of their characters, some fans have revealed something personal about their own feelings. But I digress.

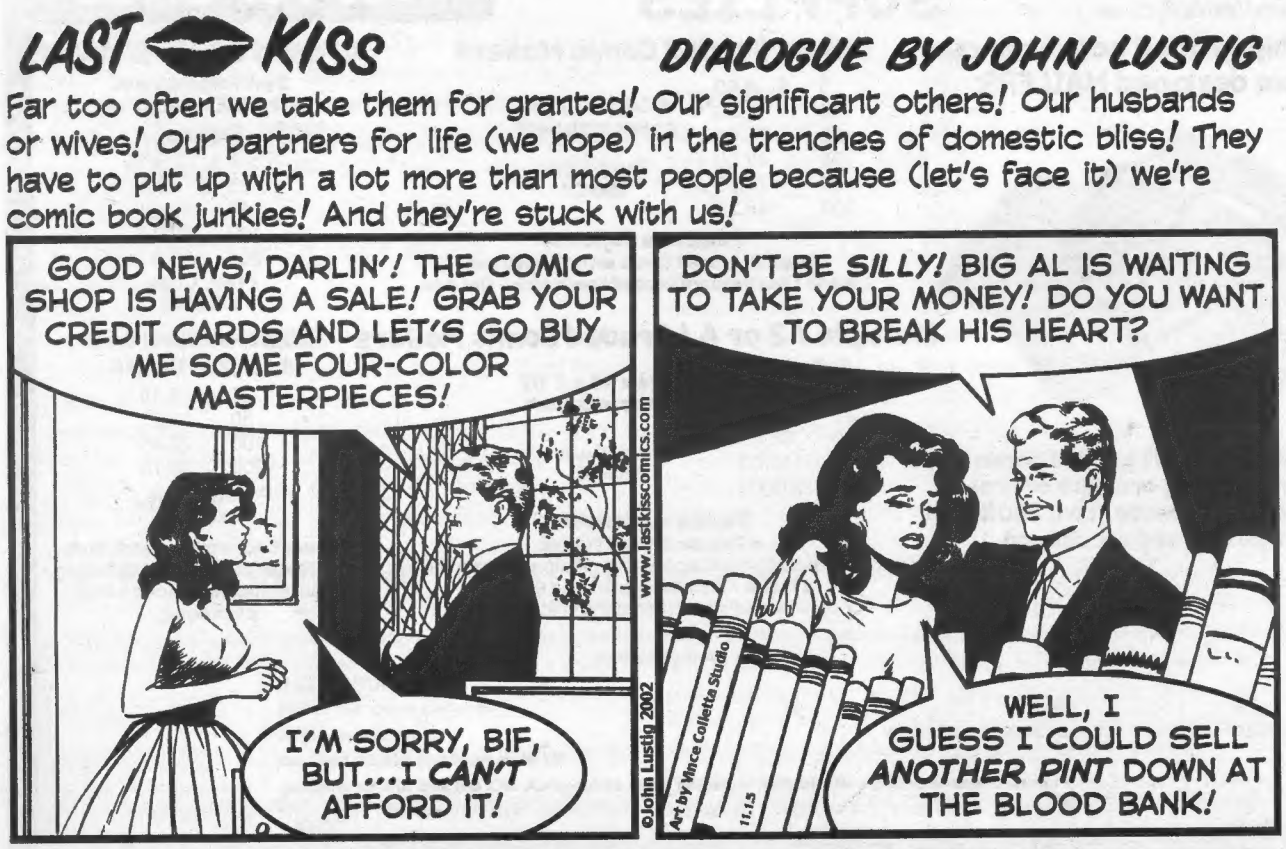
Marvel has taken a bold step and one which I am anxious to follow and support.

SERVICE

Josh Lessard

There are a few comics shops within the radius I'm willing to drive to with my two little boys. While the shops have quite a few back issues and both are willing to do subscriptions, they have flaws, in my view, that keeps me from using them regularly.

A quick note: I spend upwards of $100 a month on regular titles, trades, and mini-series. In short, I spend a lot. My collection contains quite a few full runs, including almost all X-title runs (and minis) from the classic *Uncanny X-Men* #94 to current. I'm building this collection for my boys. I want them to have a di-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DIALOGUE BY JOHN LUSTIG
Far too often we take them for granted! Our significant others! Our husbands or wives! Our partners for life (we hope) in the trenches of domestic bliss! They have to put up with a lot more than most people because (let's face it) we're comic book junkies! And they're stuck with us!
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11.13
Make it a quart! I need some graphic novels!

verse range of comics that will be appropriate when they first begin to read to the time they run off to college. My collection is their inheritance. The history of comics, as well as the stories contained in those runs, are important to me to impart to my kids. But I'll get off my soapbox and return to the topic at hand.

When I shop for comics, I have three criteria: price, service, and availability of the diverse titles in comics. While I rely heavily on Marvel, I dabble in all different veins of sequential art. I need to be able to locate, not only the common *Uncanny X-Men*, but also titles like *Age of Bronze*, Marc Hempel's *Naked Brain, Berlin*, and others that don't always make it to the shops I frequent. I'm sure others agree, when you follow a title, it's a horrible feeling to be told that the title you're searching for never made it into this month's shipment. And there's no guarantee that, after its initial offering, a comic book can be found. Even with subscriptions, you are not guaranteed that the shop owner has ordered enough to go around. Month after month of this, a happy collector doesn't make.

Then, there's the issue of price. The discount I get at one of the shops is 10% when a purchase is over a certain amount. Fair enough, you might think. Factor in the 6% tax for Connecticut, and your discount is a measly 4%. This translates a normal Marvel title to $2.16 (from $2.25). It's still less than cover, but far from saving me any real money. Add gas, the hassle of strapping two little ones into the car seat, compounded by the headache of making sure these same two little angels don't touch anything they're not supposed to in the shop, and the savings really become negligible. The other shop doesn't offer any discount.

As for the service, I'd say it's always "fair." No one goes out of his way to help, but, of course, they don't sneer at me, either. "Fair" seems to be the standard of service anywhere you go, with a general feeling that service is slipping to the lowest common denominator among merchants and service workers in general.

So I needed another avenue. Economics dictates the law of supply and demand. Staying within my radius of service, supply is limited and demand is large. I can supplement by using a mix of mail-order companies, but what I wanted was simplicity: one retailer whose service is above average, who is willing to work with me and treat me as a "special customer," while having a broad range of titles and deep discounts. I found that retailer. While I don't want to shill for anyone, I must comment on Chris at Wild Pig Comics II. His ad is in the back of this publication, and he's easy to contact. I found his website and order form a bit archaic, but, through e-mail (which he replies to faithfully), he offers a level of service that I find pleasant.

He offers subscriptions, *Previews* orders, back-issues — the works. His discounts are steep (20-30%, 15% or more on *Previews*), no tax (unless you're from New Jersey), free priority shipping either monthly or biweekly, and, above all, no hassles. His books are bagged and boarded and shipped securely. Chris has always been there to recommend a new title, to address concerns or questions, but above all to provide a service with which I can be happy.

I signed on with him almost a year ago and have since dropped all other services. Now, come rain or shine, I receive my comics every other Monday. I save quite a few dollars, I don't have to tramp out to different stores every week, and he is scrupulously honest.

Some might say the Internet takes business from local venues. But until local retailers are willing to offer a diversity of titles and discounts regularly, I cannot justify spending my family's money with them. The customer is king. We want a quality product at the best possible price, without the hassle. It seems like a simple concept and it needs to be taken to heart by local comics dealers. Chris has taken this to heart, and I'm sure his patrons will second my comments with their own. ✦

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Elvira is © and ™ 2003 Queen 'B' Productions

Elvira's got too many personal appearance gigs for any one Mistress of the Dark. Perhaps that's why an impersonator thinks he (!) can cut into El's action and take her place at some of these events? This story is based on a *True Incident* in Elvira's career, and titled **"A Bargain at Twice the Price!"**

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CLAYPOOL COMICS

BOFFIN BOOKS

How to break into comics as an artist

By **Heidi MacDonald**

Continuing an occasional series examining the steps to take in order to break into comics, to be eventually followed by a column titled "How to Break out of Comics" ...

This time, we're going to look at breaking in as an artist. I'll assume you are a penciller or a penciller-inker, and cover inkers alone in a future column.

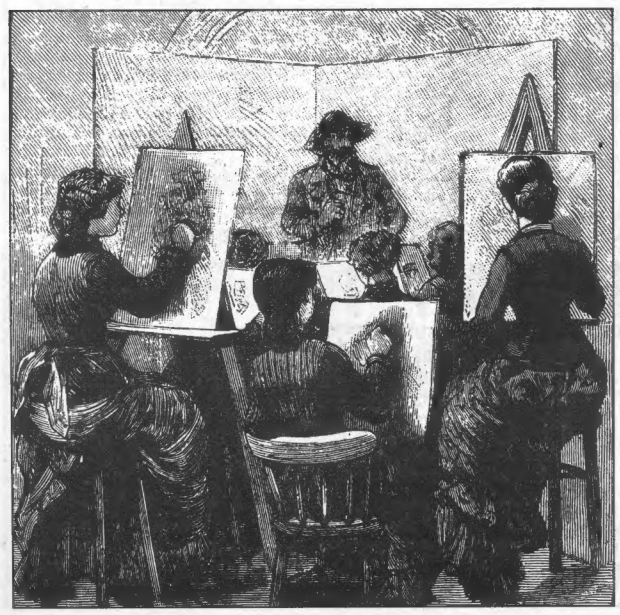
In my time in comics, I've had the occasion to look at many artists' portfolios. At conventions, portfolio review is often considered a chore. Trying to analyze the amateur scribblings on lined paper of escaped mental patients would tax the tact of anyone. And, yes, I've seen that, as has everyone who does portfolio review on a regular basis.

Nonetheless, I like doing portfolio reviews, because, one in a hundred times, the person is really good, and that makes it all worth it. I've actually hired a couple of people from portfolio review. I know that many editor types are cursing me for saying that, because it's going to mean more and more people clutching their portfolios at conventions, but I can't lie. It's true. However, the reason for this is more due to the economic downturn in the comics market, which I'll return to eventually.

Disclaimer: I am not an artist myself. I can barely scribble a duckie and a horsie. However, I have been around artists all my life, and my comments are based on what I, as an editor or consultant, look for. Being a brilliant artist and being able to sell yourself in the marketplace are two different skills. I can only speak to the second, so here goes.

First, if you want to be a comic-book artist, what they say is true: Go to art school. You will probably end up having an experience much like the one Dan Clowes outlined in his classic short story "Art School Confidential" and somewhat repeated in the film version of *Ghost World*: that is, arbitrary prejudices and foibles of various instructors may crush your spirit a bit.

However, you will make up for this by learning lots of practical advice and, more intangibly, meeting other artists and making contacts with people who will encourage you and work with you — or even possibly give you work — over the years.



If you can't afford to go to art school, you can still do the one thing that is most important to learning how to be a successful comic-book artist: Take a life drawing class.

I'm going to say that again: Take a life drawing class.

In addition, you should probably consider studying life drawing.

If there's one complaint I have when I look at portfolios, it's that the artist doesn't know how to draw people. As an illustrator, you may just have to draw one figure holding up a beer can or some such task. As a cartoonist, you must draw that same figure holding a beer can in panel one, crushing it in panel two, kicking the crushed can out the window in panel three, punching the Martian National Guard in panel four, and then flying off to Mars in panel five.

In other words, if you don't know how to draw people doing different things, in interesting poses, it will show up immediately.

In life drawing class you will get to draw models in various poses. You will learn how the neck bone connects to the shoulder bone and all that other stuff that makes people look real.

"What about Jack Kirby?" you whine. "*His* people didn't look real!"

Even if your art is heavily stylized, as Kirby's was, you will *still* be called on to make people and situations look realistic. This is generally true, even if the story does take place on Mars. Legend has it that Kirby could put his pencil on a blank piece of paper, keep moving the pencil around, lift the pencil, and have drawn a horse. He had studied horses so much that he was intimately familiar with their anatomy, postures, and motions.

You may eventually develop a very cartoony, manga-based style, but, after having looked at hundreds of portfolios, I can always tell when someone has faked it and developed a pleasing, cartoony style without having learned how to draw first. It shows up in the shorthand poses, repetitive angles, and similar characters.

The only way to give life to your drawings is to look at life. In other words, you have to draw. Draw what you see. Sketch babies, old people, beautiful girls. Even if you want to draw super-heroes, by knowing how every kind of person looks, your own characters will have more depth than if you just sit tracing J. Scott Campbell all day.

And life drawing also helps get you away from slavishly aping your favorite artist, even if it is someone good like Campbell, Art Adams, Jaime Hernandez, Bryan Hitch, or whoever you want to be just like. Once again, an editor can always tell when you've been tracing. They've seen it all. Once in a great while, an artist starts out as looking very much like another artist — Phil Jimenez' tremendous love of George Pérez leaps to mind — but in the long run you have to prove that you can do something that only *you* can do, which Phil has definitely achieved.

Study anatomy. This is an adjunct to life drawing but helps you understand what you are seeing. There are, believe it or not, only three muscles in the upper arm: the biceps, the triceps, and the oft-forgotten brachialis. Some artists seem to draw seven or eight or nine, and, personally, I think it looks stupid. There are many, many anatomy books that have photos and diagrams that will show you how everything goes together, which you should be able to find in the art store. Andrew Loomis and George Bridgeman are two older artists who have a bit of a cult following among cartoon types. Some of their books are out of print and expensive but well worth having.

During my years at Disney, I was lucky enough to see lots of concept art and animation sketches by some of the greatest animators of all time, such as Glen Keane, Andreas Dejas, and Eric Goldberg, to name but a few. All of these guys, and all top animators, study life drawing and anatomy, even if what they are animating is a teacup. Observing figures in motion helps them capture the specific poses and universal empathy of a Tarzan, a Genie, a Lilo.

What I am saying is that the hallmarks of great art — emotion, depth, spectacle — can only be gained by observation of the emotion, depth, and spectacle of the real world.

Not by looking at comic books.

Wow, I've been ranting on so long that I've run out of room. To be continued in the next column ... ✦

Art schools

Any art school where you can study drawing and painting is a good idea, but there are several colleges which now offer comics intensive courses. Probably the best known are:

School of Visual Arts (SVA)
209 E. 23rd St.
New York, NY 10010

Savannah College of Art and Design
P.O. Box 2072
Savannah, GA, 31402-3146

The Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art
37 Myrtle Ave.
Dover, NJ 07801

Cal Arts
24700 McBean Pkwy.
Valencia, CA 91355-2397

(Cal Arts doesn't have a comic-book program, *per se*, but offers a very strong animation program.)

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Price per: Item#	Size	Description	50	200	1000
675FB	6 3/4 x 10 1/2	Current Comics - fits 700	$9.50	$31.00	$135.00
700FB	7 x 10 1/2	Standard Comics - fits 725	$10.00	$32.00	$140.00
750FB	7 1/2 x 10 1/2	Silver/Golden Comics - fits 775	$10.50	$35.00	$150.00
758FB	7 5/8 x 10 1/2	Golden Age Comics - fits 800	$11.25	$37.00	$160.00
778FB	7 7/8 x 10 1/2	Super Golden Age Comics - fits 825	$12.00	$39.00	$170.00
825FB	8 1/4 x 10 1/2	Large Comics, Mag. & Letter - fits 875	$13.00	$42.00	$185.00
858FB	8 5/8 x 11 1/2	Standard Magazines	$14.00	$46.00	$200.00
		Add Shipping & Handling*	$4.00	$14.00	$54.00

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Price per: Item#	Size	Description	100	1000
700M	7 x 10 3/4	Current Comics - 1990's	$15.50	$118.00
725M	7 1/4 x 10 3/4	Standard Comics - 1970's-90's	$15.75	$119.00
775M	7 3/4 x 10 3/4	Silver/Gold Comics- 1950's-70's	$16.75	$122.00
		Add Shipping & Handling*	$2.00	$9.00

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Price per: Item#	Size	Description	100	500	2000
675HB	6 3/4 x 10 1/2	Current Comics - fits 700	$8.00	$35.00	$120.00
700HB	7 x 10 1/2	Standard Comics - fits 725	$8.50	$36.00	$125.00
750HB	7 1/2 x 10 1/2	Silver/Golden Comics - fits 775	$9.00	$39.00	$135.00
758HB	7 5/8 x 10 1/2	Golden Age Comics - fits 800	$9.75	$41.00	$145.00
778HB	7 7/8 x 10 1/2	Super Golden Age Comics - fits 825	$11.00	$47.00	$160.00
825HB	8 1/4 x 10 1/2	"Large Comics, Mag. & Letter"	$12.00	$50.00	$170.00
858HB	8 5/8 x 11 1/2	Standard Magazines	$13.00	$56.00	$190.00
		Add Shipping & Handling*	$4.00	$14.00	$54.00

Mylites 2

- Made from 2 mil thick Mylar D®.
- Dimensions are width x height plus flap.
- Flap can be folded over, tucked in, or taped closed.
- The 2 mil sleeves are twice the thickness and 4 times the protection of 1 mil thick bags.

Price per: Item#	Size	Description	50	200	1000
525M2	5 1/4 x 7 1/4	Photograph, Negatives	$9.50	$31.00	$130.00
625M2	6 1/4 x 10 1/2	Reader's Digest & Paperbacks	$10.50	$35.00	$150.00
700M2	7 x 10 3/4	Current Comics- 1990's	$10.75	$36.00	$155.00
725M2	7 1/4 x 10 3/4	Standard Comics - 1970's-90's	$11.00	$37.00	$160.00
775M2	7 3/4 x 10 3/4	Silver/Gold Comics - 1950's-70's	$11.50	$38.00	$165.00
800M2	8 x 10 3/4	Golden Age Comics - 1940's-50's	$12.00	$39.00	$175.00
825M2	8 1/4 x 10 3/4	Super Golden Age Comics	$12.50	$42.00	$180.00
875M2	8 3/4 x 12	Large Comics, Mag. & Letter	$12.75	$43.00	$185.00
900M2	9 x 12	Standard Magazines	$16.25	$53.00	$225.00
		Add Shipping & Handling*	$1.00	$4.00	$11.00

* Minimum Shipping Charge $5.00

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CURRENT COMICS

*"At **CBG**, we think more great comics are being published today than ever before. It's our mission to keep you informed about the people and publishers making news today."*

Jules Feiffer moves to Head of the Class!
Fantagraphics' fourth volume of Feiffer works takes top honors!
Comics in Your Future, Page 16

IN BRIEF

Marvel to change Ultimate covers...again

Beginning with titles scheduled to ship Feb. 5, Marvel is going to a thicker paper stock on the covers of its Ultimate titles, while still retaining the glossiness the covers have become knwn for.

The first title to have the new cover will be *Ultimate Spider-Man* #36.

The change came as a result of retailers saying that corners of the new covers were beginning to curl, due to the weight of the laminate on the thin paper.

Marvel Editor in Chief Joe Quesada said, "Thanks to our retail partners we learned of, and then confirmed that we had a problem, and found a way to resolve it."

BULLETINS AT ONCE!
Get breaking news on CURRENT COMICS right away. Visit https://www.collect.com/login/newuser.asp to subscribe to our e-mail bulletin. Upon arrival at the site, choose "comics" as an interest, enter your e-mail address, and select that you wish to receive newsletters. You'll receive a weekly preview of upcoming sections — as well as instant news on breaking stories in today's comics hobby!

"Dial H for Hero" to get its own series

Original *House of Mystery* series to explore human side of super-heroes

By **Nathan Melby**

The power dial from DC's "Dial H For Hero" series in *House of Mystery* #156 (Jan 66) will return this year. It reappeared in *Adventure Comics* in 1981 and in *New Teen Titans* later in the '80s, but, has laid dormant for the past decade. Now, it will be found by Jerry Feldon in *H-E-R-O*, due in stores Feb. 12.

The story will revolve around the dial that, when activated, gives its owner specific powers for a short amount of time. The only problem is that the owners do not know what powers they will receive and how long they will last. Series Editor Peter Tomasi told ***CBG*** that the dial will first be found by Feldon, who will be the spotlight in the first four issues, but then it will pass to someone else, and readers will probably never see Feldon again.

The new ongoing series will be written by Wil Pfeifer and drawn by Kano. John Van Fleet will provide painted covers. Pfeifer told ***CBG*** he liked the series because it is different from the old ones.

"The old series was about the powers, and we wanted to focus more on the people. Who *wouldn't* love to fly, be invulnerable, or have unlimited strength? It would be scary and strange, though, and that is what we want to look into.

"I always focus more on the people, and not the super-powers. With that, we could examine all kinds of different people. I like to think of it as 'Dial H For Hero' meets *100 Bullets*. For example, if you had a license to kill, what would you do with it?"

"I like to think of it as 'Dial H for Hero' meets 100 Bullets."
— Wil Pfeifer

Tomasi said that he thinks one of the main differences between this comic book and others are that readers can jump on at almost any point.

"I am hoping it feels a little different from the usual adult fare out there. It plays into a void that I feel exists. This is the kind of book you can come in nice and clean and go along for the ride," Tomasi said.

Pfeifer laid out for ***CBG*** a little of what is to come in the first eight issues of *H-E-R-O*. "Jerry introduces a lot of the concepts in the series. After that, we are going to switch and go to a guy who seemingly has everything. We are going to show how the hero dial could screw those things up. The character Matt Allen could ignore everything else in his life, just to concentrate on the dial.

"After that, Matt's daughter is going to get the dial. We are going to see how she deals with it in school. Will she try to hide it or use it for her own benefit?

"The current storyline I am working on is what would happen if some high school guys get it. If you have ever seen the TV show *Jackass*, think about doing the stunts on that show if you were invulnerable," Pfeifer said.

In the old DC series featuring the Hero Dial, the company featured a bonus in which readers could send in ideas for characters into which the dial would turn its owner. Tomasi said that there are no plans to do that with *H-E-R-O*.

"I think that would cause too many legal hassles these days, plus I would like to just stick with my creative team for now," Tomasi said.

One of the functions of the original series was also to test the acceptance of characters in a search for new ones — including the idea of bringing back the Golden Age Plastic Man. That is not an announced function of *H-E-R-O* at this point.

However, other DC heroes are scheduled to put in an appearance, beginning with a certain Man of Steel in #1. But don't look for them to play a huge part in the series.

"It definitely takes place smack dab in the DC universe," Pfeifer said, "but not everyone in the DC universe gets to meet these super-heroes on a regular basis.

"I want to treat super-heroes the way we treat movie stars in our universe. I want to keep the mystery and the celebrity of the super-heroes." ✦

"AND EVERY TIME I TRY TO FORGET ABOUT THAT DAY...
"...MOLLY WANTS TO HEAR HOW I SAW SUPERMAN AGAIN."
LISTEN, JER-- YOU CAN'T BE LIKE SUPERMAN. I CAN'T BE LIKE SUPERMAN. NO ONE CAN.
IT'S NO REASON TO KILL YOURSEL-
NO-NO-NO, YOU DON'T GET IT.
"I DID BECOME LIKE SUPERMAN.
"THAT'S WHY I WANT TO KILL MYSELF."
COME AGAIN?

INSIDE THIS SECTION

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- **Comics Guide** by Maggie Thompson 24

Looking better

P. Craig Russell collection provides diverse, improved retrospective

By **Nathan Melby**

D. P. Craig Russell has gathered fans and admirers in the course of his decades of work in the comics field, including work on *Batman: Legend of the Dark Knight* and Neil Gaiman's *Sandman*. Russell's fans need to wait no longer for a collection of some of the artist's work from the past 20 years. Dark Horse Comics has released *Isolation and Illusion: Collected Short Stories of P. Craig Russell*, a 120-page trade paperback retailing for $14.95.

Russell told ***CBG*** he was happy that Dark Horse had reprinted his work. "It saves me from having to shuffle through a whole bunch of different books to find one of my own stories. It is satisfying to see a lot of stories from diverse publications all under one cover — in most cases, looking better than they did originally." Russell has a considerable following, and his fans will find the collection even more convenient than will the artist himself.

The volume features an introduction by Will Pfeifer, who told ***CBG***, "I have known Craig since I was in college. I still go back and see him when I am in the area. They were doing the collection and they needed an intro. I am doing a short 'Hellboy' story for Dark Horse with Craig, and he asked me."

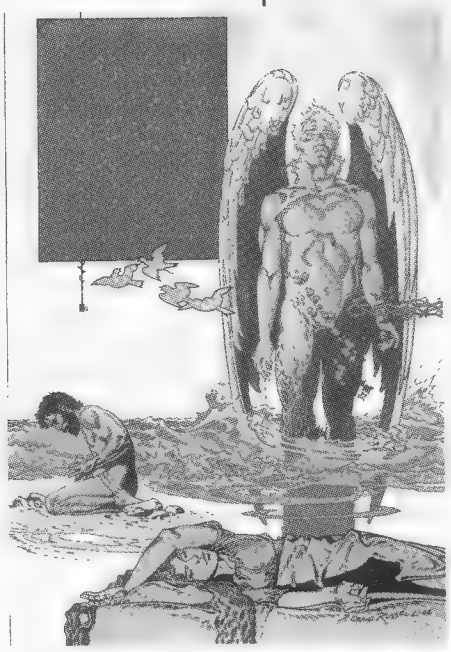
Isolation and Illusion will feature original stories and adaptations that Russell has done over the years. It includes adaptations of such classic material as O. Henry's "Gift of the Magi," Cyrano de Bergerac's "A Voyage to the Moon," and H.P. Lovecraft's "From Beyond." Russell said that each of his adaptations has a different story behind it.

"For 'Voyage to the Moon,' I was cleaning up a library room and found a book that I had bought for 10¢. I think it was called *The Greatest Short Stories Ever Written*," Russell said. "I started leafing through it and was so tickled by it I went downstairs and started working on it immediately."

Russell commented that that was unusual for him. He said that ordinarily he will let a story he wants to do "sit in a drawer" until he is ready to produce it in comic-book format.

For the Lovecraft story, Russell was approached by Steve Bissette, who asked him if he would be interested in doing a story for a book he was putting together, and Russell agreed. The same went for "The Gift of The Magi," which was featured in a benefit book done by Marvel and Star*Reach titled *Within Our Reach*.

He commented that he finds differences between projects involving adaptations of existing works and creating a completely new work from a script, as he did with Neil Gaiman for *Sandman*. Russell said both processes have their different virtues and pleasures. "When I turned Michael Moorcock's *Stormbringer* into a 180-page comic book, it was a lot more grunt work than working from a script," Russell said. "But that is OK with me, because I find that to be a lot of fun and it is one of my favorite things to do."



Russell added, "When working from a full script, there is nothing I have to do to edit. All I have to do is find the right pictures."

The collection will include a new take on one earlier creation. Russell had to redo a page by hand because the pencils he had used previously would not turn out well in the new volume."What is ironic about it is that I carefully preserve copies of everything I do. The difference between the version in *Isolation and Illusion* and my other work was that it was a story in pencil. This meant that, when I sent them the copy, it was really light. That is one of only two pages I have ever done that I have lost. I had to take my original page and trace it off on the light box.

"That is not as easy as it sounds," Russell continued. "It was so nice they were doing this collection that I did not want one page to stand out, so I took a couple of days to redo a page." ✦

TOP SELLING COMICS
January 2003

The following comics are the preorder projections for the month of January based on orders placed by retailers reporting to ***Comics & Games Retailer****'s Market Beat column. The number at right is in thousands of copies ordered.*

1	*Batman* #611	DC	129
2	*Ultimate War* #3	Marvel	115
3	*Ult. Spider-Man* #34	Marvel	101
4	*Ult. Spider-Man* #35	Marvel	101
5	*New X-Men* #136	Marvel	101
6	*Amaz. Spider-Man* #49	Marvel	97
7	*Ultimate X-Men* #27	Marvel	91
8	*Ultimate X-Men* #28	Marvel	91
9	*Uncanny X-Men* #417	Marvel	90
10	*Uncanny X-Men* #418	Marvel	90
11	*Transformers Armada* #7	Dremwav	74
12	*Ultimate Daredevil & Elektra* #4	Marvel	71
13	*Daredevil* #42	Marvel	68
14	*Wolverine* #185	Marvel	67
15	*X-Treme X-Men* #20	Marvel	65
16	*JLA* #77	DC	65
17	*Transformers War Within* #4	Dremwav	64
18	*Avengers* #63	Marvel	60
19	*Captain America* #8	Marvel	59
20	*Truth* #3	Marvel	58
21	*Green Arrow* #21	DC	57
22	*Hulk/Wolverine 6 Hours* #1	Marvel	56
23	*Spider-Man Peter Parker* #52	Marvel	53
24	*Fantastic Four* #65	Marvel	53
25	*Masters of the Universe* #3	Image	53
26	*G.I. Joe* #14	Image	53
27	*Hulk/Wolverine 6 Hours* #2	Marvel	52
28	*Incredible Hulk* #49	Marvel	52
29	*Thor* #58	Marvel	46
30	*Punisher* #21	Marvel	45
31	*Iron Man* #64	Marvel	45
32	*G.I. Joe: Frontline* #4	Image	44
33	*JSA* #44	DC	43
34	*Detective Comics* #778	DC	41
35	*Green Lantern* #158	DC	40
36	*Spawn* #130	Image	40
37	*Robotech* #2	DC	39
38	*Aquaman* #2	DC	39
39	*Exiles* #21	Marvel	39
40	*X-Men Unlimited* #41	Marvel	39

Source: Comics & Games Retailer

NEW COMICS shipping Feb. 2-8

The following information is taken from publisher and distributor solicitations and updates and is as accurate as possible at press time. Check with your local retailer to find out what day new comics go on the shelves. Comics that are delayed or rescheduled will be tracked in future *CBG Calendars*.

Note: ✪ indicates a rescheduled comic book that appeared in a previous *CBG Calendar*.

Archie Comic Publications

Archie and Friends #67, $2.19
Betty #122, $2.19
Betty & Veronica Digest #136, $2.39
Jughead #149, $2.19
Jughead's Double Digest #92, $3.59

CrossGen

Demon Wars: Trial By Fire #3 (Of 5), $2.95
First #28, $2.95
Mystic #33, $2.95
Mystic Vol. 4 TP Out All Night, $15.95
Way Of The Rat #10, $2.95

Dark Horse

Oh My Goddess! #95: Traveler (Part 5 Of 5), $3.50
Oh My Goddess!: Hand In Hand TP, $17.95
Star Wars: Empire #6, $2.99

DC Comics

100 Bullets #42, $2.50
✪ *100%* #5 (of 5), $5.95 (Oct. 6-12)
21 Down #6, $2.95
Action Comics #800, $3.95
✪ *Automatic Kafka* #7, $2.95 (Jan. 12-18)
Batgirl: Year One #3 (Of 9), $2.95
Batman: Bruce Wayne - Fugitive Vol. 2 TP, $12.95
Big Daddy Danger #7 (Of 9), $2.95
Birds Of Prey: Catwoman/Batgirl #1 (Of 2), $5.95
Codename: Knockout #21, $2.75
Cosmic Odyssey TP - New Ed, $19.95
Detective Comics #779, $2.75
Doom Patrol #17, $2.50
Hawkman #12, $2.50
JLA: Riddle Of The Beast SC, $14.95
Justice League Adventures #16, $2.25
Looney Tunes #99, $2.25
Mad Magazine #427, $3.50
Robotech #3 (Of 6), $2.95
Sandman Presents: Bast #2 (Of 3), $2.95
Spectre #26, $2.75
Steampunk: Drama Obscura, $14.95
Vertigo Pop!: London #4 (Of 4), $2.95
Young Justice #54, $2.75
Zero Girl: Full Circle #4 (Of 5), $2.95

Gutsoon! Entertainment

Raijin Comics #9, $4.95
RGA Magazine #9, $0.99

Image Comics

Firebreather #2 (Of 4), $2.95
Jack Staff #1, $2.95
Karza #1 (Of 4), $2.95
Lovebunny And Mr Hell "A Day In The Love Life", $2.95
Micronauts #5, $2.95
Noble Causes: In Sickness & In Health Vol. 1 TP, $12.95
Paradigm #6, $2.95
Venture #2, $2.95

Marvel Comics

Alias #19, $2.99
Apache Skies TP, $12.99
Eden's Trail #4 (Of 5), $2.99
Elektra #21, $2.99
Exiles #22, $2.25
Fantastic Four: Unstable Molecules #2 (Of 4), $2.99
Marvel Double-Shot #4 (Of 4), $2.99
Rawhide Kid #1 (Of 5), $2.99
Spider-Girl #57, $2.25
Spider-Man: Blue #6 (Of 6), $3.50
Thor #59, $2.25
Ultimate Spider-Man #36, $2.25
Ultimate Spider-Man Vol. 5: Public Scrutiny TP, $11.99
Uncanny X-Men #419, $2.25

Oni Press

Kissing Chaos: Nonstop Beauty #3 (of 4), $2.95
One Plus One #4 (of 5), $2.95

Penny Farthing Press

Decoy: Storm Of The Century TP, $17.95

NOW APPEARING!

January 25

Amber Benson (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer* cast member Tara) at Metro Entertainment, 6 W. Anapamu, Santa Barbara, **California** 93101, beginning at noon.

January 31

Donna Barr (*Desert Peach, Stinz*), **Madison Clell** (*Cuckoo*), **Dan Clowes** (*Ghost World, Eightball*), **Howard Cruse** (*Stuck Rubber Baby*), **Renee French** (*The Soap Lady*), **Roberta Gregory** (*Naughty Bits*), **Rafael Navarro** (*Sanambulo*), **Richard Sala** (*Evil Eye*), and **Serena Valentino** (*Gloom Cookie*), at Lee's Comics, 1020-F N. Rengstorff Ave., Mountain View, **California**, from 6 to 9 p.m.

Terry Moore (*Strangers in Paradise*), **Batton Lash** (*Supernatural Law*), and **Tom Beland** (*True Story, Swear to God*) at Atlantis Fantasyworld, 1020 Cedar St., Santa Cruz, **California** Call (831) 426-0158 for times.

February 1

Anthony Montgomery and **Dominic Keating** (*Enterprise* cast members Ensign Travis Mayweather and Lt. Malcolm Reed, respectively) at Metro Entertainment, 6 W. Anapamu, Santa Barbara, **California** 93101. Call (805) 963-2168 for times.

*[**Editor's Note:** Send items for this feature to **Now Appearing**, c/o **Comics Buyer's Guide**, 700 E. State St., Iola, Wis. 54990, fax it (again c/o **CBG**) to (715) 445-4087, or e-mail it to **cbgnews@krause.com**.]*

Alternative offerings, Marvel stock improves, and Curtis on hiatus

A quick news roundup

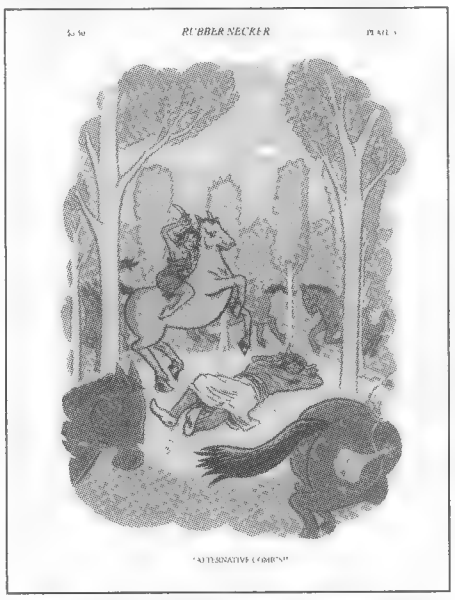
By **Nathan Melby**

Alternative Press has announced some of its May releases, including the third issue of an Eisner Award-nominated title and a book co-published with Top Shelf Productions.

Alternative will publish Nick Bertozzi's *Rubber Necker* #3. The Ignatz-awarded and Eisner-nominated comic will feature stories ranging from funny to sad.

Alternative will also team up with Top Shelf Publishing to bring Dean Haspiel's *Aim to Dazzle*. The story will chronicle the adventures of cavalier vagabond Billy Dogma.

Both comics are suggested for mature readers with partial color interiors, a full color cover and a suggested retail price of $3.50.



*Nick Bertozzi's **Rubber Necker** will return in May.*

In addition to its new comics releases in May, Alternative will also publish Xeric Foundation grant award-winner Derek Kirk Kim's *Same Difference and Other Stories*.

The trade paperback will collect stories which explore a twenty-something's quarter-life crisis, romantic neuroses, and Korean-American life.

The 154-page book comes with a suggested retail price of $12.

Marvel 4th quarter better than expected

Marvel Comics announced a better than expected fourth-quarter performance Jan. 7. Their cash balance at the end of 2002 was more than $50 million and their stock had risen dramatically.

The price of Marvel's stock has been steadily increasing since the success of the *Spider-Man* film and, as of Jan. 17, it was more than $10 per share and approaching $11. Marvel's 2003 predictions are that earnings per share will increase from $88 to $93 million, and 57¢ and 62¢ respectively. Also Marvel projects free cash flow will increase from $69 to $74 million.

Marvel's announcement reported that the company expects to have an even better year in 2003, being aided by the *Daredevil*, *X-Men*, and *Hulk* films.

Marvel CEO Allan Lipson said, "Having successfully demonstrated the power of Marvel brands to our business partners and to consumers worldwide, and having completed our transformation into a licensing driven entertainment company in 2002, we look for stronger bottom-line results in 2003."

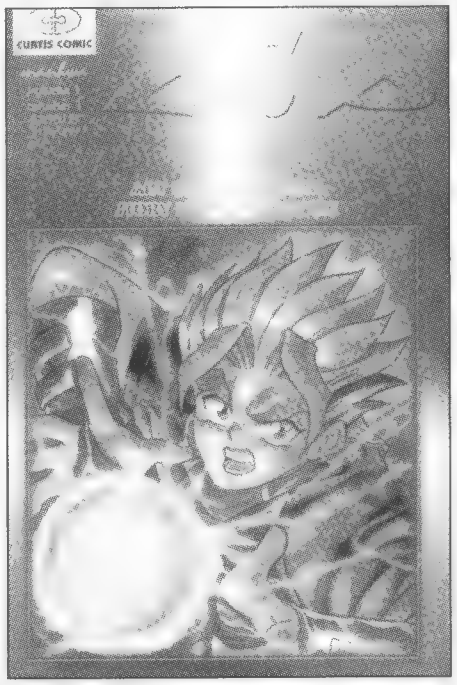
Curtis Comic not gone

Fans of new publisher Curtis Comic might have noticed that no issues have shipped lately. They do not have to worry though.

Curtis Comic Publisher Curtis Lee told **CBG**, "We are just having some technical difficulties right now, but they will be fixed in the near future."

Lee said that he expects to have new comics and even some trade paperbacks in stores by early spring.

Curtis Comic began publishing in 2002 with titles such as, *ESP*, *Slasher*, *Moon*, and *Pandemonium*. ✦



*Curtis Comic's offerings include **ESP**.*

CONFIRMED SHIPPING

They're out there: We have received confirmation that the following titles have shipped and should be available in stores. This reflects shipping information received through Jan. 17:

Abstract Studios: *Strangers In Paradise Vol. III* #55, $2.95 (Nov)

AC Comics: *Irish of the Jungle* #1, $9.95 (Dec. 22-28)

ACG: *Adventures of John Doe* #1, $5.95 (Nov)
Shotgun Harker #1, $5.95 (Dec)

Amaze Ink (Slave Labor Graphics): *Hsu and Chan* #1, $2.95 (Jan)
Private Beach #7, $2.95 (Nov)

Antarctic Press: *Ninja High School* #102, $3.50 (Jan)

Archie Comic Publications: *Laugh Digest* #181, $2.39 (Jan. 12-18)
Sabrina Vol. 2 #41, $2.19 (Jan. 12-18)

Black Library: *Inferno! Magazine* #34, $6.95 (Jan)
Warhammer #64, $3.50 (Jan)

Comicsone.Com: *Bride of Deimos GN* #1, $9.95 (Sep)
Crayon Shinchan GN #2, $9.95 (Dec)
Iron Wok Jan GN #2, $9.95 (Dec)
Legendary Couple GN #2, $13.95 (Nov)
Mega Dragon & Tiger GN #2, $13.95 (Nov)
Red Prowling Devil GN #2, $9.95 (Dec)
Storm Riders GN #8, $13.95 (Nov)
Weapon of the Gods GN #4, $13.95 (Nov)

CPM Manga: *Geobreeders Book 5: Big Trouble At Tokyo Tower*, $15.95 (Jan. 12-18)

CrossGen: *Negation* #14, $2.95 (Jan. 12-18)
Sigil #32, $2.95 (Jan. 12-18)
Sojourn #19, $2.95 (Jan. 12-18)

DC Comics: *Action Comics* #799, $2.25 (Jan. 12-18)
Azrael: Agent of the Bat #98, $2.95 (Jan. 12-18)
Batgirl #36, $2.50 (Jan. 12-18)
Batman: Gotham Knights #37, $2.75 (Jan. 12-18)
Black Sun #5 (of 6), $2.95 (Jan. 12-18)
Forever Maelstrom #3 (of 6), $2.95 (Jan. 12-18)
Green Lantern #158, $2.25 (Jan. 12-18)
Hunter: The Age of Magic #19, $2.75 (Jan. 12-18)
JLA: The Golden Perfect TP, $12.95 (Jan. 12-18)
Lucifer #34, $2.50 (Jan. 12-18)
Mek #3 (of 3), $2.95 (Jan. 12-18)
Nightwing #77, $2.25 (Jan. 12-18)
Power Company #12, $2.75 (Jan. 19-25)
Powerpuff Girls #34, $2.25 (Jan. 12-18)
Spectre #25, $2.75 (Jan. 5-11)

Dreamwave: *Fate of the Blade* #4, $2.95 (Nov)

Eurocomics: *Zora: She Vampire GN Vol. 1*, $9.50 (Jan)

Fantagraphics Books: *Alice In Sexland* #8, $3.50 (Dec)
Head #3 , $3.50 (Nov)

Gutsoon! Entertainment: *Fist of North Star: Master Ed Vol. 1 GN*, $14.95 (Jan. 12-18)
Raijin Comics #6, $4.95 (Jan. 12-18)

I Box Publishing: *Thieves & Kings: Riverwolf Comic & CD*, $16.50 (Nov)

Image Comics: *Battle of the Planets* #6, $2.99 (Dec)
G.I. Joe Frontline #3, $2.95 (Dec. 1-7)
Masters of the Universe #2, (two covers $2.95) (Dec. 22-28)
Midnight Nation TP, $29.99 (Sep. 1-7)
Savage Dragon #103, $2.95 (Sep. 15-21)
Spawn #121, $2.50 (Apr 21-27)

Ironcat: *Vampire Yui Vol. 5* #1, $2.95 (Sep)
You and Me Vol. 1 #3, $2.95 (Sep)

Kenzer & Company: *Knights of the Dinner Table: Everknights* #4, $2.99 (Jan)
Knights of the Dinner Table: Illustrated #18, $2.99 (Jan)

Marvel Comics: *Daredevil/Elektra: Love & War HC*, $29.99 (Nov. 3-9)
Daredevil: The Movie Official Comic Book Adaptation, $3.50 (Jan. 12-18)
Iron Man #64, $2.25 (Jan. 12-18)
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Spider-Man Peter Parker #52, $2.25 (Jan. 19-25)
Thunderbolts #75, $3.50 (Dec. 22-28)
Ultimate Daredevil And Elektra TP, $11.99 (Jan. 12-18)
Ultimate Spider-Man #35, $2.25 (Jan. 12-18)
Ultimates #8, $2.25 (Sep. 22-28)
Wolverine #185, $2.25 (Jan. 12-18)

Oni Press: *Queen & Country* #13, $2.95 (Jan. 12-18)

Second To Some Studios: *Fade from Blue* #5, $1.50 (Jan)

Sirius Entertainment: *Banzai Girl* #1 Encore Ed, $2.95 (Dec. 29-Jan. 4)

Tony Raiola: *Little Orphan Annie Little Worker*, $9.50 (Jan)

Viz Communications: *Animerica Extra February 2003 Vol. 6* #2, $4.95 (Jan. 5-11)
Big O Part 3 #3 (of 4), $3.50 (Jan. 5-11)
Inu-Yasha Part 7 #6 (of 8), $2.95 (Jan. 5-11)
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Comics In Your Future

Publisher's Picks & Retailer Reviews

A number of publishers were recently asked to choose, from the material they have scheduled to ship in March, which titles they felt would be most worthy of the attention of readers and collectors. Participating retailers were then asked to predict how popular each title will be and to grade each preview from A+ to F, according to how successful they found it as a work of art or entertainment.

Retailer Panelists Reviewing March Titles

S.A. Bennett
Dark Star Books & Comics, Yellow Springs, OH

Cliff Biggers
Dr. No's Comics, Marietta, GA

Charlie Harris
Charlie's Comic Books Tucson, AZ

Phil Mateer
All about Books and Comics, Phoenix, AZ

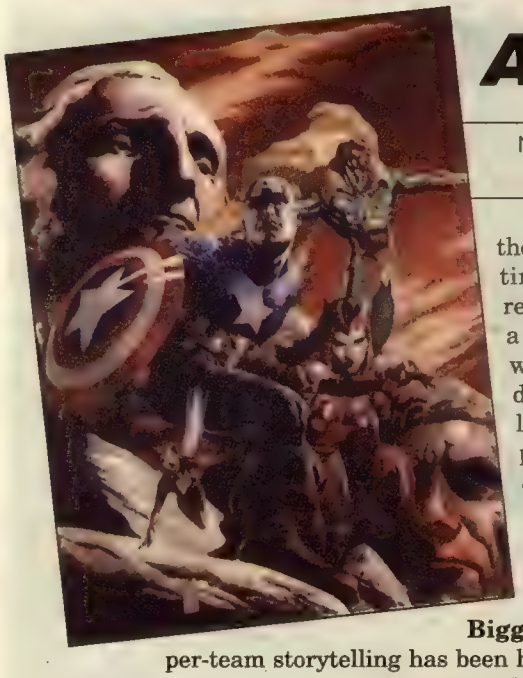
Robert Scott
Comickaze San Diego, CA

Jeremy Shorr
Titan Comics Dallas, TX

Avengers #65

Marvel
$2.25, color, 32 pgs.

New penciller Qlivier Coipel joins writer Geoff Johns to begin the "Red Zone" story arc.



Bennett: For those waiting for signs the Marvel universe is going to be "Ultimized," this issue of *Avengers* sure reads like *The Ultimates* — and not in a good way. There's nothing actually wrong here; it's just humorless, wonderless, and plain no fun — it's more like a CNN disaster report than a super-hero comic book (and, though Johns is a tremendously talented writer, he probably should give up trying to make characters like Ant-Man and Jack of Hearts "realistic"). Grade: **C**.

Biggers: Until now, Johns' on-target super-team storytelling has been held back by art not particularly suited for the series or Johns' strengths — but the arrival of Coipel on the title changes that. Coipel's old, dynamic, detailed visuals work with the title, rather than at cross purposes. Grade: **A**.

Harris: A timely tale of a biological attack becomes an unwitting comedy of errors. An unknown agent causes rapid death, so the government and the superheroes quarantine the area until they determine what the agent is, right? No, emergency teams rush in with inadequate protection and begin transporting the infected to another park in the path of the wind-borne virus. This was too unbelievable to even enjoy. Grade: **C+**.

Mateer: Standard, solid super-heroics is what we expect from *The Avengers*, and that's what we get here. The first half of the issue mostly sets up the crisis — at Mount Rushmore, a big scary red cloud appears, infecting everyone it touches, and starts drifting toward populated areas — and shows the civilians and emergency personnel desperately trying to cope with it. That gives the eventual dramatic entrance of The Avengers more impact and helps to show the awe they inspire, as Johns touches on Cap's steely resolve, The Vision's spookiness, Ant-Man's regular-guy kvetching, and so on. It's only the first chapter of a longer story, so there's no resolution, but it does a good job of putting all the pieces into play, leaving the reader eager to come back to see the rest of the story. Grade: **B**.

Scott: It's unclear where this story is going, and, frankly, it isn't compelling enough to make readers feel that they should have been reading more *Avengers* lately. It wasn't a bad story, just an average one in all respects, and the best thing about it was that this issue's "villain" was not a character but an anthrax-like "red fog." Hopefully, the next issue will show whether Johns can build on this one. Grade: **C**.

Shorr: Johns keeps rolling onward, as he continues to infuse the *Avengers* with his own special style. Each Avenger gets a little touch of the Johns' magic in this issue, which features such memorable lines as, "The world can't end until the Avengers say so." Terrific stuff! Grade: **A**.

PANEL'S GRADE **B**

Feiffer: The Collected Works Vol. 4: Passionella

Fantagraphics
$12.95, b/w, 90 pgs.

Fantagraphics' collection of the work of cartoonist Jules Feiffer continues with a focus on his work for *Sick, Sick, Sick* (later renamed *Feiffer*), his early work for *Playboy*, and his satire on Hollywood sexuality, *Passionella*.

HEAD OF THE CLASS

Scott: Like The Smothers Brothers and Bill Cosby, Feiffer is someone whose work is fondly remembered. My parents had paperback collections of his work that I must have read and re-read dozens of times, and this was a welcome trip down memory lane. Feiffer's work is reminiscent of Will Eisner's without the autobiographical slant, and his humor stands up as well today as it did when it first appeared. Grade: **A**.

Harris: With the passage of time, Feiffer's work doesn't hold up well. While many enjoyed these same strips when they originally appeared in *The Village Voice* and *Playboy*, they have lost their relevance and, consequently, their appeal. The fact that this is the fourth of a projected 15 volumes is almost overwhelming, unless there are enough comics historians to support such a sizable project. Grade: **C**.

Bennett: There's an extremely short list of Americans working in comics who deserve the designation "genius," and clearly Feiffer is one of them. He's a genuinely serious (in intent) cartoonist whose artistically minimalist style and genuinely adult sensibilities have enriched us for decades. If you don't know his work, you really should. Grade: **A**.

PANEL'S GRADE **A-**

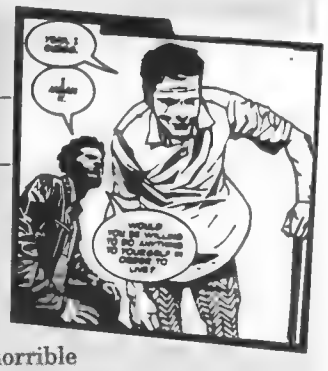
Biggers: A blend of brilliance and mediocrity, this book illustrates the problem many have with Feiffer. When he's "on," his work sparkles and his acerbic voice comes through clearly; when he's coasting, he comes across as a self-parody, no funnier or more insightful than a daily installment of *Nancy*. This volume has some of both moments — but it also reminds us once again that Feiffer's brand of humor is most effective in small doses. Grade: **B**.

Mateer: The title story, a modern showbiz fairy tale, counts as one of the first graphic novels (along with Harvey Kurtzman's *Jungle Book*), and both it and Feiffer's late-Eisenhower-era strips from *The Village Voice*, with their angst-ridden middle-class citizens, earnest-but-clueless presidents, and fears of war, seem eerily appropriate today. For $13, you get one of the premiere cartoonist-satirists of the 20th century, just at the top of his game — that should be a hard bargain for any comics fan to pass up. Grade: **A**.

Shorr: What can be said about Feiffer that someone else hasn't already said? That he is one of the seminal and influential artists of our time? That his sharp and incisive wit lays low great mountains and brings strong men to their knees? Naaaw. Grade: **A+**.

Blood and Water #1

DC/Vertigo
$2.95, color, 32 pgs.



Judd Winick takes a stab at vampire legends in a five-issue mini-series. With art by Tomm Coker, the series features Adam Heller, a man with a terminal disease, whose friends turn him into a vampire to prevent his death.

Biggers: The Vertigo renaissance continues. *Blood and Water* is a title that compares favorably to those with strong storytelling, intriguing characters, and solid visuals that draw the reader into the story. I had all but dismissed comic-book vampire stories as superfluous, in light of the sub-genre's descent into stereotypes and formula — but Winick brings all of his strengths to play in this clever, unpredictable series. Grade: **A**.

Bennett: Vampires — ugh. It seems as if we've waded through a river of the insipid pale things over the last decade, but Winick has worked a wonder and come up with a vampire-related premise that's actually inspired. He makes the lead's agonizing situation entirely believable, and, without that (and the reader's sympathy), the whole thing would unravel quickly. I want to see what happens next. Grade: **B**.

PANEL'S GRADE **B+**

Mateer: Winick's strengths are his characters: They're witty, compassionate, and seem like regular folks, even when they're boy geniuses, mutants, or super-heroes. This first issue is only 20% of the story, so it's mostly an introduction to the problem, plus the guy's predictable astonishment, denial, and fear at his friends' revelation. What saves it are the humor and the little character set pieces; we like these people and are interested in what will happen to them, how they'll react, and what they'll have to say about it. Grade: **B**.

Scott: All of Winick's non-super-hero work is totally entertaining, and *Blood and Water* is definitely that. Immediately, the main character, Adam, is established in a real and likable way, and, despite the horrible position he's in, Winick's dialogue keeps him from seeming whiney or preachy. Coker's art seems to match the story well. Grade: **A**.

Shorr: An interesting idea, replete with real-life illnesses and vampires. We get relatively intense medical scenes along with a detailed description of the sicknesses involved — perhaps a little too *much* information, but it packs a punch of reality to the situation. The stereotypes are dead on, and the characters are interesting and engaging. Grade: **A-**.

Harris: A tightly written tale with pathos, humor, and a cast of likable characters. Coker illustrates with his usual high level of passion, and, even if you're tired of vampires, you'll be anxiously awaiting all five issues of this series. Grade: **A**.

Little Scrowlie #1

Slave Labor
$3.50, b/w, 24 pgs.

Jen Feinberg and Todd Meister's self-published series moves to Slave Labor with a new first issue, where Elisabeth and her grumpy cat deal with the threat of Cthulhu and his minions.

Mateer: Was the world really crying for another Goth comic book? Well, the human characters are standard for a book like this, but at least are presented with a mild sense of humor and self-aware satire; the stylized art is, at a minimum, interesting and never quite descends into preciousness. What makes the issue click, though, are the cats — they'll ring true to any cat "owner." Their inscrutable ability to stare, fascinated, at empty air is what gets the whole plot moving. Grade: **B-**.

Bennett: Usually something like this receives a polite "this isn't my sort of thing" or "maybe the guys with black nail polish will like it," but this is just bad. From the logo (it has to be the single ugliest, most unreadable one seen since the glory days of the undergrounds) to the barely drawn art to the scribbles that pass for lettering, even by the standards of amateurish, pointless, gloomy claptrap, this is awful. Grade: **F**.

PANEL'S GRADE **C-**

Biggers: In concept, great — in execution, mediocre. The look at suburban Goth life as filtered through the experiences of two young women, their ensemble cast of friends and enemies, and their black cat, Scrowlie, is, at times, clever and refreshing. However, the art is marred by enormous expanses of poorly planned white space, unfocused design, and particularly poor lettering that continually hinders the effectiveness of the story. Grade: **C**.

Harris: An extremely shallow Goth chick who talks incessantly, has a lot in common with Valley Girls, and is not holding up well under the trauma of having nothing to wear just isn't interesting. There is a market for this book, since I can think of two of my customers who will like it, but I can only give it a **C-**.

Scott: The premise: A self-absorbed suburban Goth chick and her cat who sees dead people could have been truly funny, along the lines of the hilarious and self-deprecating *Gother than Thou* card game, but this just falls flat. Try Neko Press' *F.S.C.* or Slave Labor's *Nightmare Tales* to see this done right. Grade: **D-**.

Shorr: A comic book starring a Goth kitty and her "owners" has a strong start to life. The wit and character associated with the comic book helps things out. The art, while idiosyncratic and original, will stop some people cold. But it's a worthy addition to the comic-book library. Grade: **B**.

The Devil's Footprints #1

Dark Horse
$2.99, color, 32 pgs.

When the family of a deceased sorcerer is struck down by magical illnesses, it's up to the wizard's youngest son to ascertain the cause by using his late father's tricks. The four-issue mini-series is written by Scott Allie with art by Paul Lee.

Harris: Humor, mystic arts, suspense, intrigue, mystery, and a nod to H.P. Lovecraft with lavish highly detailed art plus colors by Dave Stewart, a personal favorite, provides an evenly paced demonic adventure. Grade: **B**.

Biggers: Solid horror storytelling but nothing exceptional. Not to say it's bad — Allie's script is well-crafted, and Lee's art is quite appealing — but the first issue didn't wholly hook me. If you like horror comics, you'll like this book — but it's a book that targets horror's existing fans rather than hooking those who had resisted horror's appeal beforehand. Grade: **B**.

Mateer: This offers New England horror (nobody says "Necronomicon," but you wouldn't be surprised, if they did) with a dead sorcerer's two sons, one a skeptic and one a dabbler in the occult, trying to dispel a curse on their family. The story's told smoothly, and the art looks moody and promising; there's not a lot of action in this first issue, but we're promised that things will be suitably apocalyptic by the end. Grade: **B**.

PANEL'S GRADE **B-**

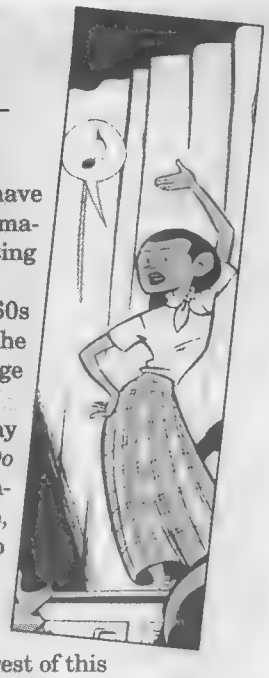
Scott: This went nowhere fast. It reads as if it had been translated by someone not quite familiar with the English language and switched from vignette to vignette, seemingly at random, leaving a feeling of skipping pages. What seemed like an interesting premise is utterly confusing, making it uncertain whether #2 will be worth the effort. Grade: **C-**.

Shorr: An atmospheric story of dread and foreboding. Unfortunately, the entire issue is devoted to the dread and foreboding parts, so, by the time it finally gets done and starts moving on, it's lost most of the reader's attention. Grade: **C**.

Bennett: It's a little too early to tell exactly where this one is going, but it definitely earns points right out of the box for not being like any other horror series being published right now. It takes (so far) a restrained approach to supernatural horror, effectively setting up a mood of impending doom in an entirely believable world. Grade: **B**.

Days like This

Oni
$8.95, b/w, 80 pgs.



Writer J. Torres focuses on the 1960s and the rise of fictional girl group Tina and the Tiaras in this graphic novel illustrated by Scott Chantler.

Mateer: Here's a good comics story that's not about super-heroes, crime, science fiction, or fantasy: It's a historical novel about the pop-music industry, set in the early '60s in New York City. There's a hopeful teen-age songwriter named Karen Prince (instead of Carole King) and a "Harmony Building" instead of a Brill Building, but both the cheerful optimism and the desperate grab-for-the-brass-ring ambition are there. Everything rings true — a tribute to the creators' careful research — and the open, cartoony art makes the characters accessible; we want to see what they'll do next. Grade: **A-**.

Bennett: If you're of a certain age, it's nearly impossible thinking of a story set in the early 1960s as being a "period piece" (but let's face it, it's the last time this century when a time traveler would need a change of clothes), but this graphic novel does a splendid job of establishing the feel of the era's music industry. And, just as important, it doesn't paint it as some sort of rosy "nostalgic" wonderland; it feels immediate and accessible, so it's easy to connect emotionally with the characters. Here's one that definitely deserves mainstream attention. Grade: **B**.

PANEL'S GRADE **B**

Biggers: The idea of a comic-book exploration of the "hit factory" days of pop music is promising, but *Days like This* doesn't wholly deliver. Torres' script is entertaining, but he doesn't seem to have much of anything new to say. And, as good as Chantler's animation-style art is, with its look reminiscent of 1950s advertising art, it doesn't seem to mesh well with the story. Grade: **C+**.

Harris: A clean, expressive art style reminiscent of '60s cartoons and a story of the record industry that parallels the David Geffin-Carole King story is a charming coming-of-age story appropriate for all ages. Grade: **B+**.

Scott: While not necessarily a book I'd go out of my way for, it was a "cute" story, reminiscent of *That Thing You Do* meets *Hairspray*. The dialogue is enough to keep readers interested in a somewhat interesting, if not totally predictable, story, and the art was competent but, again, a little too cutesy for some tastes. Grade: **C**.

Shorr: Mythical days of yesteryear are covered in a dead-on rendition of the heyday of the early 1950s music scene. The names are changed to protect the guilty, but the rest of this well-written comic book is packed with good stories and great characters. Grade: **A**.

JLA: Scary Monsters #1

DC
$2.50, color, 32 pgs.

Chris Claremont spins a tale of DC's premiere super-team, with The JLA battling ancient spirits in a resort community without turning into monsters themselves. The six-issue mini-series is illustrated by Josh Hood and Sean Parsons.

Biggers: There are real problems with any story that involves The JLA and a demon-monster-demigod-evil spirit. The mystically cosmic tale has been overdone in *JLA* of late, and this story by Claremont and Hood reinforces that. While it's great that Claremont is writing The JLA, it's a shame to see him make his JLA debut with such a lackluster storyline. Hood's art is superlative when he's illustrating ordinary people and mystical monsters, but he is less effective in capturing the dynamic energy of super-heroes. Grade: **B**.

Harris: Indian burial grounds plus vengeful spirits equals infectious monsters who want to destroy the Earth! Oh, and let's not forget the out-of-control pyrokinetic. The plot is clichéd and the art team needs some more experience. Grade: **C**.

Mateer: Old pro that he is, Claremont is dependable at setting up his plots, filling them with interesting people, and conveying characters with dialogue and action. The horror theme, involving an ancient evil that infects a few locals who become unstoppable monsters who infect others, *etc.*, leads to a few good jolts. The whole good-guys-turned-into-monsters bit should keep the series on edge, at least once The JLAers themselves start getting affected. Prediction: Really bad things will happen to the various Leaguers over the mini-series, but there'll be some sort of cosmic reset button hit at the end, and everyone will go back to normal, shaken but wiser for the experience. Grade: **B-**.

PANEL'S GRADE **C+**

Scott: The only thing scary about *JLA: Scary Monsters* is the thought that there are five more issues of this. A hard-to-discern plot with great detail paid to character development for no apparent reason and horribly wooden dialogue made this tough reading, even for a Claremont mini-series. Add to that inconsistent art, and you come up with a book that has huge ground to gain, just to become an average story. Grade: **D-**.

Bennett: For all the mixing of horror elements with the super-heroic, this is really an old-fashioned JLA story. Instead of the relentlessly apocalyptic mood of the regular series (where, when it comes to larger-than-life menaces, they've upped the ante so often they've broken the house), time is being given to allow the story to build at its own pace, plus allowing for breathing room for quiet moments with the team's civilian identities. Grade: **B**.

Shorr: OK, the prospect of Claremont writing JLA stories didn't hold much appeal. But at least the first issue is lean and mean in a number of ways that attract attention. Can this really be dragged out for six issues? Grade: **B+**.

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3 VF/NM 25.00
4 FN- 8.00
5 VF 17.00
6 VF+ 12.00
7 VF+ 10.00
8 VF+ 8.00
SCREEN THRILLS ILLUSTRATED (Warren, 1963)
V2 #1 VG- 13.00
SEA DEVILS
2 VG 56.00
2 VG 56.00
7 coverless G+ 2.00
13 VG/FN 19.00
28 VF- 23.00
SEA HUNT
4 VG+ 15.00
4 VG 12.00
6 VG- 11.00
SECRET ORIGINS (1961)
1 no front cover, G/VG 7.50
SECRET ORIGINS (1973)
1 VF- 20.00
2 VF- 11.00
3 VF/NM 16.00
3 VF+ 13.00
3 VF- 9.00
3 FN/VF 8.00
3 FN+ 6.00
3 FN 5.00
3 FN - 5.00
4 NM+ 26.00
4 NM 21.00
4 NM- 18.00
4 NM- 18.00
4 VF+ 13.00
4 VF- 9.00
4 VG 2.50
5 VF+ 14.00
5 VF+ 14.00
5 FN/VF 7.50
6 VF/NM 18.00
6 FN/VF 8.00
6 VG/FN 3.00
SECRET SIX
1 FN- 12.00
5 VF+ 20.00
SECRET SOCIETY OF SUPER VILLAINS
1 NM- (3 available) 12.00
2 NM- (4 available) 7.00
SECRETS OF HAUNTED HOUSE (DC, 1975)
2 FN 6.00
2 FN 6.00
2 FN- 5.00
2 VG 4.00
3 VG/FN 3.00
4 FN 5.00
5 VG+ 15.00
5 FN+ (Wrightson cover) 7.00
15 VF 6.00
17 VF+ 7.00
18 FN/VF 4.00
19 VF 6.00
26 VF+ 7.00
27 VF+ 7.00
28 VF/NM 8.00
30 VF+ 7.00
32 VF+ 4.50
33 VF+ 4.50
34 VF+ 4.50
35 VF+ 4.50
36 VF+ 4.50
37 VF+ 4.50
38 VF+ 4.50
39 VF- 3.50
40 FN+ 2.50
41 VF 4.00
42 VF 4.00
43 FN 2.00
45 FN- 2.00
46 VF 4.00
SECRETS OF SINISTER HOUSE (DC, 1972)
12 VG+ 3.50
14 FN 4.50
16 VF 8.00
16 FN+ 5.00
17 VF- 7.00
17 FN+ 5.00
SGT. BILKO
4 G+ 38.00
9 G 23.00
9 VG- 36.00
SGT. FURY
3 VG- 33.00
6 G/G+ 14.00
6 G 13.00
7 VG- 21.00
8 VG/FN 30.00
8 VG/FN 30.00
8 VG+ 28.00
8 G/VG 19.00
9 VG 26.00
9 G/VG 14.00
9 G/VG 14.00
10 VG 25.00
11 FN+ 22.00
11 VG+ 15.00
11 VG-/VG 9.00
12 VG- 11.00
14 VG+ 15.00
14 VG+ 15.00
15 FN+ 23.00
15 G/G+ 7.00
16 VG+ 15.00
16 VG 14.00
16 G+ 7.00
16 G+ 7.00
16 G/G+ 6.00
16 G 5.00
17 VG/FN 15.00
17 VG+ 13.00
17 VG 11.00
17 G+ 9.00
18 FN- 19.00
18 VG- 10.00
18 G/VG 7.00
19 VG 14.00
20 - 30 (Set) avg FN++ (Guide =$200.00) 85.00
20 FN 21.00
20 VG- 7.50
20 G 6.00
21 VG- 7.00
21 G+ 6.00
22 FN- 11.00
22 VG 9.00
22 VG- 7.00
23 VG+ 10.00
23 G+ 5.00
24 FN 15.00
25 VG- 8.00
25 G+ 5.00
26 NM 9.4 55.00
26 NM- (4 available) 9.2 45.00
26 VF/NM (4 available) 34.00
26 VF 34.00
26 FN- 11.00
26 VG- 7.00
26 VG- 7.00
27 VG+ 10.00
28 VG+ 10.00
28 VG- 8.00
28 VG- 8.00
28 G/VG 6.00
29 FN 13.00
29 VG/FN 10.00
29 VG- 8.00
29 G+ 5.00
30 VG 10.00
30 VG- 7.00
31 FN+ 10.00
31 VG+ 6.00
32 VG+ 6.00
33 VG+ 6.00
33 VG 6.00
33 VG- 4.50
34 FN- 7.00
34 VG+ 6.00
34 VG 5.00
35 FN 9.00
35 VG/FN 6.50
35 VG+ 6.00
36 FN- 8.00
36 VG+ 6.00
37 FN 9.00
37 VG/FN 6.50
37 VG 5.50
38 FN 9.00
38 VG+ 6.00
39 FN- 8.00
39 FN 8.00
39 VG 5.50
40 FN 8.00
40 VG/FN 6.50
40 VG+ 7.00
41 FN+ 10.00
41 FN 10.00
41 VG/FN 6.50
41 VG+ 6.00
42 FN/VF 13.00
42 FN 8.00
42 FN- 7.00
43 FN/VF 12.00
43 FN+ 10.00
43 FN 10.00
43 FN+ 10.00
43 VG+ 6.00
44 VG 5.50
44 VG- 4.50
45 FN- 7.00
45 VG/FN 6.50
45 VG+ 6.00
46 FN/VF 12.00
46 FN+ 9.00
47 VF 18.00
47 FN/VF 12.00
48 VF- 15.00
48 FN/VF 12.00
49 VF 18.00
49 VF- 15.00
50 FN+ 9.00
50 FN+ 9.00
51 VF 15.00
51 FN+ 8.00
51 FN 7.00
52 FN/VF 11.00
52 FN+ 8.00
52 FN 7.00
53 VF+ 18.00
53 VF- 13.00
53 FN+ 8.00
53 FN 7.00
53 VG+ 5.50
53 VG 5.00
54 VF 15.00
54 FN 5.00
54 VG 5.00
56 FN- 6.50
56 FN 7.00
57 FN 7.00
58 NM 9.4 28.00
58 NM 9.4 28.00
58 NM- (4 available) 9.2 22.00
58 VF/NM (4 available) 19.00
58 VF+ 18.00
58 VF- 13.00
58 VG- 4.00
59 FN 7.00
59 VG- 4.00
60 FN+ 8.00
60 VG+ 5.50
60 VG 4.00
61 VG/FN Call
62 VG/FN 5.00
63 VF- 12.00
64 VF+ 10.00
64 FN+ 7.00
64 FN+ 7.00
65 VF 13.00
65 VF- 10.00
65 FN+ 7.50
65 FN- 5.50
67 VF- 12.00
72 VF+ 14.00
74 VF- 10.00
78 FN+ 6.00
79 VF 12.00
79 FN 6.00
81 VF 12.00
81 VF- 10.00
82 VF+ 13.00
82 VF- 11.00
84 FN- 5.00
87 FN+ 6.00
89 VF 11.00
91 FN 6.00
94 VF- 8.00
95 FN/VF 6.50
96 VF- 8.00
99 VF+ 8.00
99 VF- 8.00
100 FN 7.00
100 FN- 6.00
106 VF+ 9.00
108 VF- 7.00
108 VF- 7.00
110 VF+ 9.00
110 VF- 9.00
111 VF/NM 11.00
111 VF+ 9.00
112 VF 8.00
113 FN/VF 7.00
114 VF+ 9.00
114 VF- 7.00
115 VF/NM 11.00
115 VF/NM 11.00
116 VF+ 9.00
117 VF/NM 11.00
117 VF/NM 11.00
117 VF+ 9.00
117 FN 5.00
118 VF/NM 10.00
118 VF 8.00
120 VF 8.00
120 VF- 8.00
120 VF- 8.00
120 VF- 8.00
122 VF 6.00
122 VG 2.00
126 VF/NM 8.00
126 VF+ 7.00
127 VF/NM 8.00
127 VF 6.00
129 VF/NM 4.00
130 VF/NM 8.00
131 VF 6.00
132 VF/NM 8.00
139 VF/NM 8.00
140 VF/NM 8.00
141 VF+ 7.00
147 VF+ 7.00
155 VF 6.00
156 VF 6.00
157 VF 6.00
Annual 2 VG- 7.00
Annual 3 VG+ 7.00
Annual 4 VF- 13.00
Annual 4 VG+ 5.00
Annual 4 VG+ 5.00
Annual 4 VG 4.50
Annual 4 G/VG 4.00
Annual 7 FN+ (2 available) 6.00
Annual 7 VG+ 4.00
SHADOW (1973)
1 NM 24.00
1 VF/NM 17.00
1 VF/NM 17.00
1 VF+ 14.00
1 VF 14.00
1 VF+ 14.00
1 VF 12.00
1 VF- 10.00
1 VF- 10.00
2 VF+ 8.00
2 VF (4 available) 7.00
2 VF- 6.00
2 FN- (2 available) 3.50
3 VF (Kaluta/ Wrightson art) 11.00
3 VF 11.00
3 VF- 9.00
4 NM- 9.2 13.00
4 VF/NM 10.00
4 VF+ (3 available) 8.00
4 VF (3 available) 7.00
5 NM- (3 available) 9.2 8.00
5 VF/NM 6.00
SHANNA THE SHE-DEVIL
2 VF+ 12.00
2 VF 10.00
2 VF 10.00
2 VF- 10.00
2 FN+ 6.00
2 FN 5.00
4 VF 7.00
4 VF- 6.00
SHAZAM (1973)
1 NM- 17.00
1 VF/NM 14.00
1 VF/NM 14.00
1 VF+ 12.00
1 VF 11.00
1 FN/VF 10.00
1 FN+ 8.00
2 NM+ 14.00
2 NM+ 14.00
2 NM 11.00
2 NM- 11.00
2 NM- 10.00
2 VF/NM (5 available) 7.00
2 VF (6 available) 5.00
3 VF 5.00
3 FN/VF 5.00
4 NM- 10.00
4 VF/NM 8.00
4 VF/NM 8.00
4 VF+ 7.00
4 VF- 5.00
4 FN- 3.00
5 FN- 3.00
5 VF/NM 6.00
6 VF 5.00
7 NM 10.00
8 (100 pg) VG- 6.00
11 VF 3.50
28 VF/NM 7.00
SHERLOCK HOLMES (DC, 1975)
1 VF+ 17.00
1 VF 15.00
1 FN+ 7.00
1 VG/FN 4.00
SHOCKING MYSTERY CASES (Star, 1953)
53 G (L B Cole cover) 25.00
58 G+ 30.00
SHOCK SUSPENSTORIES
5 G+ 42.00
SHOWCASE
31 VG 74.00
34 VG- 180.00
34 G/VG 150.00
39 G 26.00
55 VG+ 55.00
60 VG- 37.00
63 G/VG 7.00
63 G+ 6.00
66 G/G+ 3.50
67 VG+ 7.00
68 VG+ 7.00
72 VG- 5.00
73 FN 35.00
74 FN/VF 28.00
74 FN+ 22.00
74 FN- 16.00
75 VF- 50.00
75 FN- 21.00
80 FN/VF 35.00
82 VG+ 12.00
82 VG- 10.00
82 G- 5.00
83 VF 33.00
87 VG 5.00
88 VG 4.00
90 FN- 5.00
91 VG+ 4.50
91 VG+ 4.50
92 VF+ 11.00
92 FN- 5.00
92 FN- 5.00
93 VG 4.00
93 G+ 2.50
95 VF+ 7.00
96 NM 11.00
96 FN+ 4.00
100 VF/NM 12.00
101 NM 10.00
101 VF/NM 7.00
101 VF+ 7.00
101 VF 5.00
102 NM 10.00
102 NM 10.00
102 NM 10.00
102 NM- 9.00
102 NM- 9.00
102 VF/NM 8.00
102 VF/NM 8.00
102 FN 3.00
103 NM 10.00
103 NM- 9.00
103 VF/NM 8.00
104 VF/NM 8.00
SILVER SURFER
1 G- 36.00
2 G 35.00
2 G- 16.00
4 G 40.00
5 G/VG 14.00
5 G+ 12.00
6 VG- 17.00
7 VF 70.00
7 VG- 17.00
8 VG/FN 17.00
9 FN/VF 31.00
9 VG+ 15.00
10 FN+ 23.00
10 VG/FN 17.00
10 VG- 9.00
11 VF/NM 55.00
11 VF+ 48.00
11 FN 16.00
11 VG+ 11.00
12 VG/FN 13.00
12 VG+ 11.00
13 FR/G 4.00
14 FN 27.00
15 FN- 13.00
15 G/VG 9.00
15 G 6.00
16 VF/NM 55.00
16 VF 42.00
16 G/VG 9.00
17 NM 80.00
17 VF+ 48.00
17 VF- 37.00
17 VG- 10.00
18 VF/NM 55.00
18 VF+ 48.00
18 FN- 15.00
18 VG+ 12.00
1 (1982) NM- 9.00
1 VF+ 6.00
SINGLE SERIES
15 G- 20.00
SINISTER HOUSE OF SECRET LOVE (DC)
1 FN- 42.00
SIX GUN WESTERN (Atlas, 1957)
1 FN (Binder holes Crandall, Williamson art) 18.00
3 VF+ (Binder holes Williamson art) 20.00
SOAP OPERA LOVE (Charlton, low print run)
1 VF+ (5 available) 17.00
2 VF+ (5 available) 17.00
3 VF (5 available) 15.00
SOAP OPERA ROMANCES (Charlton, low print run)
1 FN/VF (4 available) 11.00
2 VF (5 available) 15.00
3 NM- (5 available) 9.2 22.00
4 FN+ (5 available) 9.00
5 VF+ (5 available) 17.00
SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE
5 FN 36.00
SPACE ADVENTURES
2 (1952) FR/G 22.00
20 VF+ (minor staple pull) 100.00
24 VF 75.00
24 VF- 65.00
24 FN/VF 55.00
24 FN/VF 55.00
50 VF++ 21.00
(1968)
6 NM- 21.00
7 VG 3.00
8 NM- 21.00
SPACE MAN (Dell)
4 FN- 9.00
8 FN 10.00
10 FN 6.00
SPACEMEN (WARREN)
8 (1964) VF+ 49.00
SPACE: 1999
2 VF/NM 6.00
2 VF/NM 6.00
5 VF/NM 6.00
7 VF/NM 6.00
7 VF+ 5.00
SPARKY WATTS
2 (1943) VG- 45.00
SPAWN
1 NM 9.4 19.00
SPECIAL MARVEL EDITION
4 VF 12.00
5 VF- 5.00
8 FN/VF 4.00
9 VF+ 7.00
9 FN+ 4.00
10 VF+ 7.00
10 VF 6.00
11 VF (Reprints S Fury 13) 7.00
12 VF 6.00
12 FN 4.00
13 VF+ 7.00
13 FN- 3.00
15 VF+ 50.00
15 VG+ 8.00
16 VF+ 23.00
16 VF 20.00
16 VF- 18.00
16 FN/VF 13.00
SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN (Magazine, 1968)
1 FN+ 30.00
1 FN- 24.00
1 FN- 24.00
1 (1976) NM 30.00
1 NM 27.00
1 NM- 25.00
1 NM- 25.00
1 VF/NM 22.00
1 VF/NM 22.00
2 VF/NM 10.00
1-52 (Set. Missing #s 6, 16 26 44) avg VF/NM (No discount) 135.00
SPECTRE (1967)
1 G+ 10.00
1 VG (logo missing) 5.00
2 VF 42.00
6 VG 8.00
6 VG- 6.50
6 G 4.50
7 FN 15.00
7 VG 9.00
9 VF (Wrightson art) 35.00
SPEED BUGGY
2 VF+ 10.00
SPELLBOUND (Atlas, 1957)
32 VG (Torres art) 34.00
SPIDER-MAN VS. WOLVERINE
1 NM/M 20.00
SPIDEY SUPER STORIES
2 VF+ 15.00
2 VF 12.00
2 VF- 12.00
2 VF- 10.00
3 VF- 10.00
4 VF+ 13.00
4 VF+ 13.00
4 FN 6.00
5 FN+ 7.00
7 VF- 10.00
8 VF 11.00
8 VF- 10.00
9 FN+ 7.00
10 VF/NM 13.00
10 VF+ 10.00
10 FN/VF 9.00
16 VF/NM 11.00
16 VF/NM 11.00
16 VF+ 10.00
16 VF+ 10.00
16 VF 9.00
17 VF/NM (4 available) 9.00
24 VG/FN 3.00
26 FN/VF 5.50
38 VF+ 8.00
39 VF+ 7.00
39 VF 7.00
39 VF- 6.00
40 VF 7.00
40 VF- 6.00
41 VF+ 8.00
41 VF+ 8.00
42 FN- 3.50
46 FN/VF 5.50
49 VF/NM 9.00
50 VF/NM 9.00
51 NM- 10.00
51 VF/NM 9.00
51 VF/NM 9.00
51 VF/NM 9.00
51 VF 7.00
53 VF+ 8.00
54 NM- 15.00
54 NM- 15.00
54 VF/NM 13.00
55 NM 17.00
55 VF/NM 13.00
55 VF+ 11.00
57 VF- 8.00
SPIRIT SECTIONS
9/7/41 VG- 12.00
4/12/42 G-/G 7.00
9/20/42 G+ 6.00
THE SPIRIT (Kitchen Sink, 1973)
1 NM- (5 available) 10.00
2 NM (5 available) 12.00
(Both issues for $17)
SPOOF (Marvel)
1 (1970) VF+ 12.00
1 VG/FN 4.50
1 VG 4.00
2 NM- 12.00
2 VF/NM 11.00
2 FN/VF 8.00
2 VG+ 4.50
3 NM+ 18.00
3 NM- 12.00
3 VF+ 10.00
4 NM 14.00
4 NM- 12.00
4 FN 6.00
4 VG+ 3.50
5 NM 14.00
5 VF+ 10.00
5 VF 9.00
SPOOK (Star, 1954)
29 VG- (L B Cole cover) 49.00
SPOOKY
4 G+ 12.00
21 VF+ 21.00
21 VF+ 21.00
21 VF+ 21.00
SPOOKY HAUNTED HOUSE
2 VF++ 9.00
9 VF- 6.00
SPOOKY SPOOKTOWN (Giants, 1962)
30 VG 6.00
SPYMAN
3 VF+ 20.00
STAR SPANGLED COMICS
109 FR+ 23.00
STAR SPANGLED WAR STORIES
28 G- 16.00
95 VG (logo missing) 6.00
110 G- 8.00
117 G- 7.00
153 VG- 5.00
164 VG+ 3.50
165 G+ 2.00
169 VG/FN 3.50
174 VG 3.00
175 VF+ 10.00
178 FN 4.50
179 VF/NM 12.00
179 VF- 8.00
182 FN 6.00
183 FN 6.00
185 FN/VF 5.00
187 FN/VF 5.00
188 VF+ 8.00
188 VF- 6.00
190 VF- 6.00
190 FN+ 4.00
190 VG/FN 2.50
191 VF- 6.00
192 VF 7.00
192 VF- 6.00
192 VF- 6.00
193 VF+ 8.00
195 VF+ 8.00
195 VF- 6.00
195 FN+ 4.00
196 VF 7.00
196 VF 7.00
196 FN/VF 5.00
197 VF 7.00
197 FN 3.50
198 VF/NM 9.00
198 VF/NM 9.00
198 VF+ 8.00
198 VF+ 8.00
198 VF- 6.00
198 FN/VF 5.00
198 FN+ 4.00
200 VF 9.00
200 VF- 8.00
200 VF- 8.00
STAR TREK (Gold Key)
3 VF/NM 170.00
3 VF 125.00
3 VF- 105.00
4 VF+ 150.00
4 VF 100.00
4 FN/VF 78.00
4 FN+ 60.00
5 VF/NM 180.00
5 FN+ 60.00
5 FN+ 60.00
5 FR/G 10.00
6 VF/NM 145.00
8 VF/NM 120.00
10 VF/NM 80.00
11 VF 60.00
12 NM 9.4 120.00
12 FN/VF 34.00
13 VG/FN 18.00
15 NM- 9.2 95.00
15 VF/NM 80.00
17 NM- 9.2 95.00
22 FN/VF 25.00
24 VF/NM 60.00
31 VG/FN 11.00
STAR WARS
1 (Reprint) VF+ 6.00
1 (Reprint) VF+ 6.00
1 (Reprint) VF 5.00
2 VF+ 13.00
2 (Reprint) VF+ 4.00
4 VF/NM 16.00
4 VF 11.00
4 FN/VF 8.00
4 FN+ 7.00
4 FN 6.00
5 VF/NM 15.00
5 VF+ 13.00
5 VF 12.00
7 NM 12.00
7 NM- 11.00
7 NM- 11.00
8 VF/NM 10.00
9 NM- 11.00
13 NM/M 13.00
13 NM/M 13.00
13 NM/M 13.00
13 NM/M 13.00
13 NM/M 13.00
32 VF/NM 7.00
32 VF/NM 7.00
39 NM/M 9.00
39 NM/M 9.00
39 NM/M 9.00
40 NM/M 9.00
41 VF/NM 7.00
42 NM- 8.00
43 NM/M 9.00
44 VF/NM 7.00
44 VF+ 6.00
47 NM/M 9.00
47 NM- 7.00
56 VF/NM 7.00
57 VF/NM 7.00
58 NM+ 11.00
58 NM- 11.00
58 NM/M 14.00
59 NM 9.00
59 NM 9.00
59 NM 9.00
60 VF+ 6.00
63 NM- 9.00
63 NM 9.00
69 NM 9.00
71 VF/NM 8.00
72 NM+ 12.00
73 VF/NM 9.00
74 NM+ 12.00
74 VF/NM 9.00
75 VF+ 11.00
75 NM+ 12.00
75 VF/NM 9.00
76 NM 10.00
77 NM+ 12.00
82 NM 12.00
82 NM- 12.00
82 NM- 11.00
83 NM 12.00
86 NM+ 14.00
86 NM+ 14.00
86 NM+ 14.00
87 NM+ 14.00
87 NM 12.00
88 NM 12.00
89 NM- 11.00
89 VF/NM 9.00
90 NM+ 14.00
91 NM 15.00
93 NM 15.00
94 NM 15.00
95 NM 15.00
96 NM 15.00
98 VF/NM 11.00
98 VF+ 8.00
98 NM- 13.00
98 VF/NM 11.00
99 NM+ 19.00
99 NM 15.00
99 NM 15.00
100 NM 18.00
101 NM 18.00
101 NM 18.00
101 NM- 16.00
103 NM 18.00
103 NM- 16.00
103 NM- 16.00
104 NM 18.00
104 VF/NM 14.00
STEVE CANYON
5 VG+ 25.00
6 VG+ 25.00
STORIES BY FAMOUS AUTHORS
3 VG+ 75.00
3 VG+ 75.00
5 VG- 30.00
5 VG- 30.00
6 G+ 31.00
6 FR/G (3 available) 16.00
7 VG 34.00
8 FR+ 13.00
9 FN+ 69.00
STRANGE ADVENTURES
61 VF- (date on cover) 60.00
66 FN 54.00
135 G+ 12.00
148 vg 12.00
179 VF+ 31.00
180 FN 57.00
195 FN 22.00
195 VG- 11.00
195 G/VG 9.00
197 VG 6.00
199 VG+ 17.00
201 FN/VF 17.00
202 VF- 13.00
208 G+ 6.00
209 VF- 35.00
209 FN- 14.00
210 FN 15.00
210 VG+ 10.00
213 VF+ 31.00
214 VF+ 30.00
224-243 (Missing 235, 237) (Set) avg VF- (No discount) 79.00
240 VF/NM 9.00
241 NM- 11.00
242 NM+ 18.00
242 VF 7.00
243 VF+ 8.00
244 FN/VF 6.50
244 FN+ 5.00
STRANGE MYSTERIES (Superior, 1954)
18 G+ 28.00
STRANGE SPORTS (DC, 1973)
1 VF+ 22.00
1 FN+ 9.00
1 FN+ 9.00
1 FN 8.00
1 FN- 7.00
1 VG+ 5.00
3 VF/NM 14.00
3 VF+ 13.00
3 VF- 9.00
3 FN/VF 8.00
4 VF+ 13.00
4 VF 11.00
4 VF- 9.00
4 FN+ 6.00
5 VF+ 11.00
5 VF- 9.00
5 VF- 9.00
5 FN 6.00
STRANGE STORIES OF SUSPENSE (Atlas, 1955)
11 G/VF 27.00
16 VG 37.00
STRANGE SUSPENSE STORIES
52 FN- 45.00
55 VG- 8.00
57 VG 10.00
60 G+ 6.00
64 G 3.00
67 G/VG 4.50
67 G 2.50
70 VG 5.00
73 VG-/VG 4.00
75 FN+ 40.00
75 VG 26.00
75 G 9.00
75 G-/G 8.00
76 VG 8.00
76 FR/G 2.00
77 VF+ 45.00
(1967)
8 VG/FN 4.00
9 VG- 3.00
STRANGE TALES
10 G/VG 90.00
113 VG 26.00
115 G/VG 60.00
127 VG 12.00
128 G/G+ 7.00
129 VG+ 13.00
130 G/VG 9.00
130 G+ 8.00
131 G-/G 5.00
133 VG+ 13.00
134 G/VG 9.00
136 FN+ 13.00
137 VG/FN 9.00
138 FN- 11.00
139 FN 12.00
140 VG 8.00
140 VG- 6.50
141 VG+ 9.00
142 FN 12.00
142 G+ 5.00
144 VG 8.00
145 VG+ 9.00
146 VF+ 32.00
147 VG/FN 10.00
147 VG+ 9.00
148 VG/FN 14.00
148 VG 11.00
148 VG- 9.00
148 G+ 7.00
150 VG 8.00
150 VG- 5.00
151 VG/FN (1st Marvel work by Steranko) 14.00
151 VG+ 13.00
152 FN/VF 17.00
154 VF- 26.00
154 VF- 26.00
154 VG+ 9.00
156 VF- 26.00
157 VF 30.00
158 FN+ 14.00
158 VG 8.00
159 FN/VF 22.00
160 FN/VF 17.00
161 VF- 24.00
162 FN+ 14.00
162 VG 5.00
163 FN/VF 17.00
164 G 4.00
165 VF- 26.00
165 FN/VF 17.00
166 VF 26.00
167 FN/VF 22.00
167 VG/FN 11.00
168 FN 12.00
178 VF/NM 17.00
178 VF/NM 17.00
179 VF++ 6.00
179 VF- 4.50
180 NM- 8.00
STRANGE TERRORS (St.John, 1952)
2 VG+ 50.00
SUB-MARINER (1968)
2-41 (Set) missing 8, 25) Annual 2 avg. FN/VF to VF- (No discount) 179.00
2 VF- 37.00
2 FN/VF 26.00
3 FN/VF 17.00
3 VG+ 8.00
4 VF 30.00
4 VF- 24.00
4 FN/VF 17.00
4 VG 8.00
5 FN/VF 17.00
5 FN- 10.00
5 G+ 5.00
6 VF/NM 15.00
6 VF+ 12.00
6 VG+ 4

Letters, he gets letters

Tony hears from his readers

There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.

— Albert Einstein (1879-1955)

Two months ago, I asked ***CBG*** readers to answer three questions, though, in typical long-winded fashion, it took me three paragraphs to ask them:

Why do you read reviews? Do you read them mostly to help you find comics you might enjoy reading? Or to help you avoid comics you wouldn't enjoy? Or just to gauge your reactions to the comics you've read against those of others?

Besides reviews, what would you like me to write about in this column? Comics collecting? Comics history? Comics promotion and retailing? My old "war" stories?

Do you have a "Holy Grail" of comic-book collecting, that one issue you'll never rest until you possess, that one artist you want a sketch or a page of original art from, that one knick-knack you want for your shelf?

The answers to the middle question could be summed up thus: You want me to write about *everything!*

Each choice I mentioned was greeted enthusiastically by most respondents, and many of them went on to suggest other topics, as well. You've given me a lot to think about, including how best to shove all the other writers out of ***CBG*** and rename the paper *Tony! Tony! Tony!*

By **Tony Isabella**

There was a tad more variety to your other answers, so let's dip into the mailbox and share those with one another. First up is *Allen J. Schuler*:

I read reviews to guide me in selecting comics that might be worth my time and, in particular, my money. There is a wealth of exceptional material to be found in today's market, perhaps more so than at any other time in comics history. Through reviews I've found, among others, *The Age of Bronze, Stray Bullets, Leave It to Chance, Crusades, Bone,* and *Hawkman.* However, Theodore Sturgeon's law still obtains; there's a lot of dreck, too.

Who knows what I've avoided by reading or not reading reviews of a title? For the most part, critics don't review the real drivel. Beating up on worthless and inept comics is too easy and, in some cases, cruel. If no one reviews a book, there's probably a reason. If I overlook a truly good book, eventually it will generate buzz and a trade paperback. I can pick up on it there.

Do I have a "Holy Grail" of comic-book collecting? Alas, no. I no longer burn with a gem-like flame to own any old book. I was lured back into the world of comics by Neil Gaiman's *Sandman*. The first issue I bought off the stands was #50. I had the notion that I'd buy my way back to the first issue so that I'd eventually own them all. You know, like in the old days. Pre-trade-paperback days. I made it to #24. The first ones proved too expensive for my taste, and, before I had to make any hard decisions between desire and debt, the collections caught up to issues I'd purchased. Scratch desire.

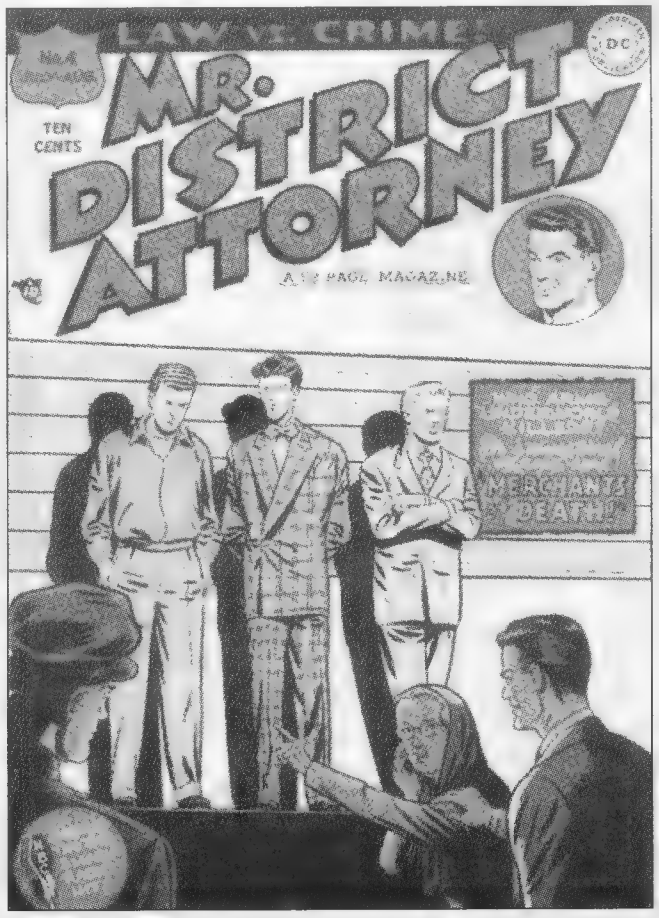
Though I don't have a comics "Grail," *per se*, I have adopted an odd collecting habit.

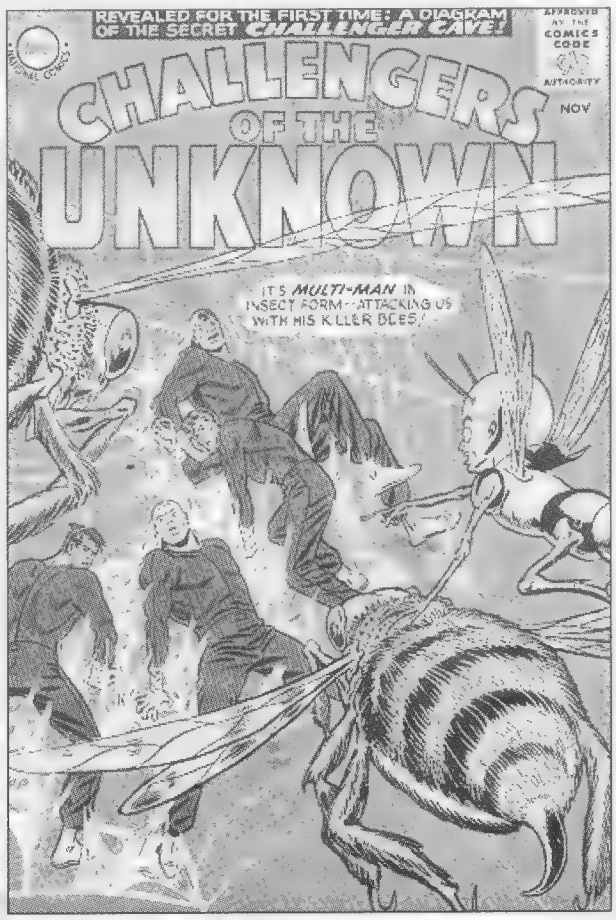
Once upon a time, I decided I wanted to own an actual Golden Age comic book, not a reprint, but the whole enchilada, smell, texture, bad printing, and all. I bought a cheap reading copy of a 1948 *Airboy*, which is about as close to the Golden Age as I'll get. Since then, I've purchased an early *Tomahawk*, a late *Mr. District Attorney*, and a mid-run *Challengers of the Unknown* issue. I don't collect any of these titles, have no desire to, but they are issues indicative of their era and genre.

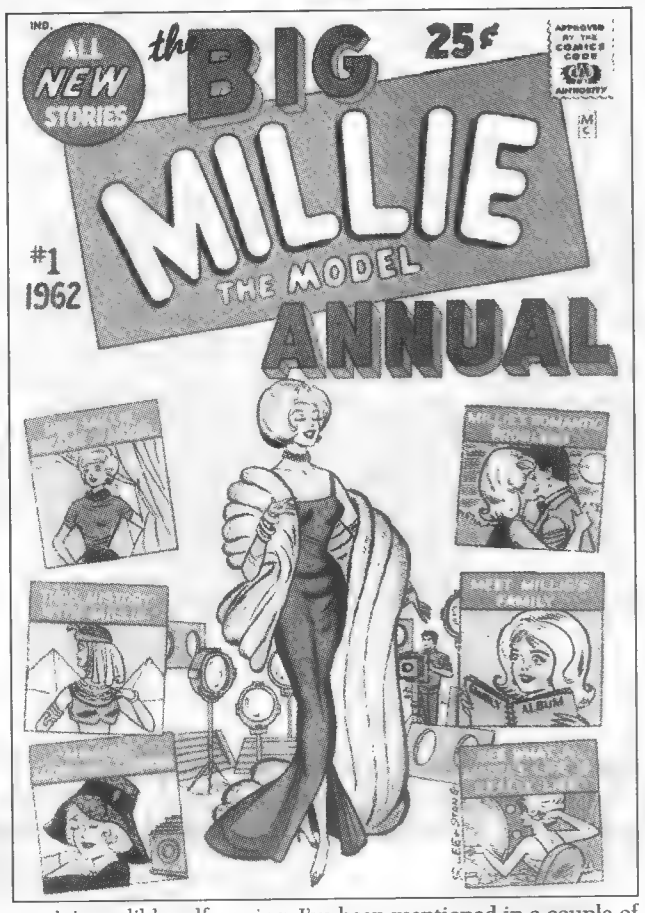
A cheap, complete, readable oddball issue of any comic book representing its time may be something I would purchase.

***Paul Iacono** writes:*

I don't regularly visit a comic shop, so reviews are my only real link to the latest projects. I use them to seek out the items I might be interested in.




REVEALED FOR THE FIRST TIME: A DIAGRAM OF THE SECRET CHALLENGER CAVE!
CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN
DC
NOV
IT'S MULTI-MAN IN INSECT FORM—ATTACKING US WITH HIS KILLER BEES!



*From **Jerry King**:*

I purchased my very first comic book in 1964, when I was but a tyke. That book changed my life forever. It was *Marvel Tales* #1, and I can still remember the day. Today, I have about 25,000 comic books and probably 20,000 of them are Marvel. When you talk about being in comics for a long time, I can relate.

I would have to say my "Holy Grail" would be a Marvel comic book, because that's what I collect most. And it would probably be more than one or two books.

How about *Pussycat* #1 or *Strange Tales Annual* #1? How about *Groovy* #1? *Our Love Story* #5? I've been lucky enough to find each of these. I'm still searching for the *Esquire Magazine* Spider-Man giveaway, *Millie the Model Annual* #1, and *Chili Special* #1. I'd say these compose the rarest of the rare, the "Holy Grails," if you will, of the Marvel universe.

Are there more like these out there? Probably. I would love to see other Marvel fans write in with their own lists of special Marvel treasures.

***David Kell** had this to say:*

I read reviews to help find comics I might enjoy, to help me avoid ones I wouldn't, and to compare to my enjoyment with that of others … in that order!

A realistic "Holy Grail" would be a piece of original art. I'd love a Superman page by Curt Swan and Murphy Anderson … or Neal Adams. A page of Adam Strange by Carmine Infantino and Anderson would also be nifty.

Unrealistic? I'd love to have complete runs of both *Superman* and *Action Comics*. I would also like some place to store these collections properly.

*From **Lee "Budgie" Barnett**:*

Why do I read reviews? Often, it's simply because I enjoy reading the way certain people write. I read your reviews mainly for the same reason I read the rest of your columns. I like the way you write. Whether it's a comic book, a retelling of a "war story," or a review.

I'm afraid I don't have any "Holy Grails" of collecting that aren't incredibly self-serving. I've been mentioned in a couple of comic-book stories and I'd love the original art to those pages, but I've never really done anything about it other than put out the occasional feeler. If you have either the first issue or the trade paperback of *Blaze of Glory*, the Ostrander/Manco work from a couple of years back, take a look at the final page of the first issue and you'll know why I want the original.

Brian Ahern stuck me in a *Bumpkin Buzz* strip a long time ago. The strip commented how it was always a British journalist working for American news organizations who got sent to the War Zone. He had a reporter named Budgie reporting from the Big Bang sequence in *Zero Hour*.

If any of my own comics writing sees print, yes, I'd like one page from each story. That would be so very cool.

*I heard from **Ralph Lagana**:*

I read reviews largely to learn about comics I might normally ignore. I consider myself a Marvel collector for the most part and am inclined toward seeking out Marvel titles before working my way toward the products of other companies or individuals. Reviews of *Lucifer* and the too-brief *Orion* led me to them. *Heart of Empire*, *Age of Bronze*, and *Promethea* have found their way into my home and memory because of the superior reviews they had received. All were titles I may well have not paid much attention to when scouring the comics racks, particularly when seeing their hefty cover prices. It is also because of reviews that I am saving money toward purchasing *Eagle: The Making of an Asian-American President*.

I'm looking at the grades/scores given to various comics in ***CBG*** and more or less ignoring those receiving low marks. I don't have limitless funds to purchase comics and find that, as my little ones get older, I have less time for reading. Seeing a low grade for a title often results in my ignoring the review.

One exception to this was *Alias*, which got a very apprehensive review prior to its release. Reading about its depiction of Luke Cage was off-putting, but I wanted to judge for myself.

Did I like its use of Cage? Christmas, no! But *Alias* remains agreeable reading and finds its way to my home each month.

I would enjoy reading more reviews of comics and even books in your columns. I know the paper is titled ***Comics Buyer's Guide***, but, as many ***CBG*** columnists and editors have noted, many of your readers are generally well read. I love reading in general and wouldn't be the least upset by reviews of science or fantasy fiction in these pages. It makes perfect sense to dabble in such reviews, as so many comic-book writers make use of literature beyond comics for their research and inspiration.

We'll continue this discussion next week, but, before we call it a column, I'll throw my 2¢ in on some of what's been mentioned above. I can't let you folks do *all* the work.

'From time to time, reviewers proclaim that they won't be wasting their time, and that of the readers, by writing about comic books that, to put it charitably, aren't good. I don't subscribe to that notion. If a reviewer aspires to be more than a cheerleader, he best serves his readers, the art form, and the comics industry, by examining the good and bad and discussing where, in his view, they went right or wrong.

No one's reviews should be taken as carved in stone. Critics have their quirks, their personal likes and dislikes. However, if you read any reviewer on a regular basis, and he is doing the job properly, you'll recognize those quirks and factor them into your decision on whether to buy a particular comic book. From your view, the review you give with your doubtless hard-earned cash outweighs all others. Use this great power wisely.

I know reader Iacona's situation all too well. There isn't a comics shop within 20 miles of my home, and, when there were, none of them ever carried the variety that would have made me more than an occasional customer. Even receiving as many review copies as I do, I rely on *Previews* and my fellow critics to keep me reasonably informed on comics I might enjoy.

Quick digression question: Is there anyone outside of Marvel Comics who thinks its current *Previews* solicitation policy of big pictures and next-to-no information is a good idea? Marvel never sends me review copies, so my exposure to its titles comes solely from issues I buy or borrow. I'm not moved by the pin-up art in its solicitations; as a result, my ordering of its comics, save for those I've been buying all along, has faded to virtual non-existence. They lose.

Finally, on the subject of Marvel rarities of the past, let me add *Monsters to Laugh With, Monsters Unlimited,* and *Monster Madness* to the mix. Written by Stan Lee, these magazines combined big and beautiful black-and-white stills from classic monster movies with humorous word balloons. Oh, sure, the gags were sometimes corny, but they still bought many smiles to this reader.

Besides, *Monster Madness*, the final version of the magazine, was extremely important to my own comics career. And, if you catch me at just the right moment during my *Tony Isabella Farewell Tour,* I might even tell you the story.

Heh, heh, heh. As Stan himself taught me, *always* leave them wanting more. ✦

The Tony Isabella Farewell Tour begins with Mega-Con, Feb. 28 through March 2 at the Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Fla. For information on the event, go to: ***http://www.megaconvention.com.***

Tony's Tips!** is © Tony Isabella, 2003. Comments on or review items for this column should be sent to: Tony's Tips!, Box 1502, Medina, OH 44258. You can e-mail Tony at:* ***tony@wfcomics.com.

READING ROOM

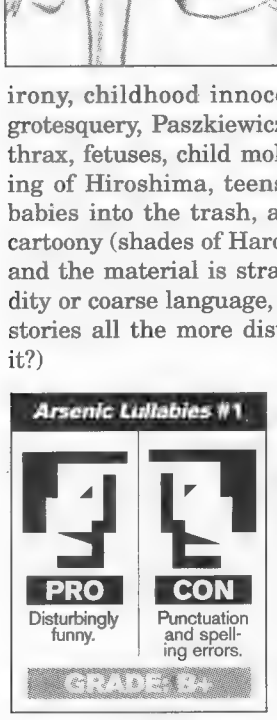
Questions? Comments? Criticisms? Subpoenas?

Correspondence to CBG, 700 E. State St., Iola, WI 54990
or ohso@krause.com

Arsenic Lullabies #1 — AAA Milwaukee Publishing

$2.50, b/w, 24 pgs., available now
Writer and artist: Douglas Paszkiewicz
reviewed by **Jack Abramowitz**

Unafraid to explore the lighter side (as well as the darker side) of the darkest, most disturbing places imaginable, *The Arsenic Lullabies* #1 is a sick and twisted comic book that apparently finds no subject taboo. Where creator Paszkiewicz gets his inspiration is anybody's guess. Actually, it's easy to see where his ideas come from: the daily newspaper. Using irony, childhood innocence, and a dash of grotesquery, Paszkiewicz finds humor in anthrax, fetuses, child molestation, the bombing of Hiroshima, teens tossing unwanted babies into the trash, and more. His art is cartoony (shades of Harold Gray and Hergé), and the material is strangely lacking in nudity or coarse language, making the startling stories all the more disturbing. (Ironic, ain't it?)



The letter accompanying the review copy of this issue says that it "will make as many people weep for the crumbling of our culture as it will make laugh out loud." That pretty much sums it up.

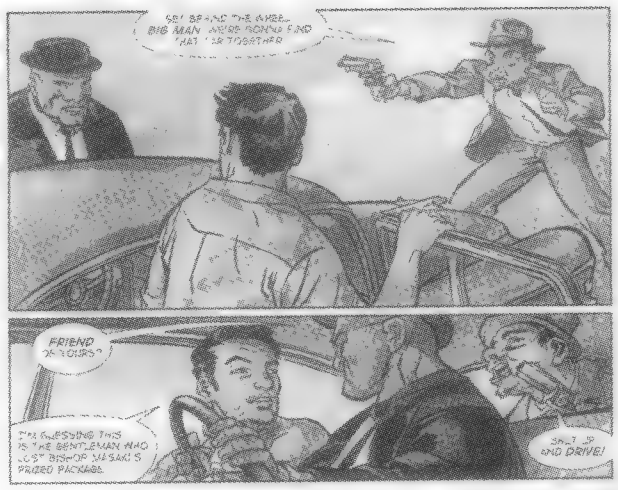
www.arseniclullabies.com

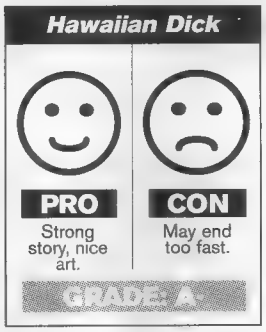
Hawaiian Dick — Image

$2.95, color, 32 pgs., available now
Writer: B. Clay Moore
Artists: Stephen Griffin
reviewed by **Rob Salkowitz**

The introduction of the Comics Code in 1954 spelled the end of the crime comics genre in the United States for more than 40 years, but lately crime titles like *Stray Bullets* and *Road to Perdition* have provided some of the most intelligent, gripping, and well-executed material on the stands. *Hawaiian Dick*, the new three-issue mini-series from writer Moore and Griffin is a worthy entry into the field and great reading for comic and pulp fans alike.

The story takes place in Hawaii in the early 1950s, pre-statehood. Private detective Byrd has migrated from the mainland, driven from a big-city police force by some mysterious scandal and making his way with odd-job assignments from local shady characters. His old buddy from the war, Mo Kalama, is an islander on the Honolulu police force, and together they're trying to crack a missing persons case with ties to an eerie island legend.





Moore's story is tightly plotted and fast-paced, deftly walking a fine line between hardboiled cliché (albeit with an exotic twist) and gritty realism. The characters are well-drawn and sympathetic, and Moore gets the most out of his interesting choice of time period and setting. Griffin's art is appealing and well-executed in a modest style that puts good storytelling ahead of spectacular showmanship. His layouts are unassuming, but the painted watercolor effect adds drama and atmosphere.

Hawaiian Dick is slated for three issues, which means the plot will have to continue at a breakneck pace. Too bad — the characters and their world seem as if they could easily support a longer and more complex story. Perhaps a successful run will bring them back for a return engagement.

www.imagecomics.com

PICK OF THE WEEK

Dear Julia, GN — Top Shelf

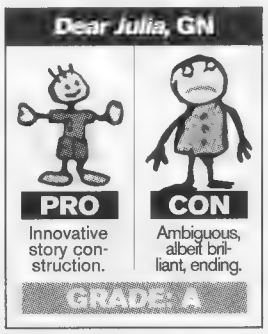
Artist and writer: Brian Biggs
$12.95, b/w, 112 pgs., available now
ISBN 1-891830-12-0

One of the many innovative aspects of Biggs' story is the way he introduces the protagonist: When first seen, the lonely man known only as Boyd is ready to jump off a ledge outside his eighth-story apartment. From this point on, Biggs takes a different approach, focusing more on how this strange man got to this point, rather than what happens afterward.

Boyd is an unusual character unto himself; he's a man forced into loneliness because he has come to hold utter contempt for the human race. His reason? He's obsessed with the idea of being able to fly, or, more appropriately, he's frustrated by man's inability to do so. Instead, he looks up to, literally, the birds and insects that fly around and above him. Despite this, over time, he has managed to overcome his frustrations and lead a normal life.

At least, until a little man named Leo pops into his life — a man who seemingly has proof that he has invented (what else?) a fully functioning set of artificial wings. The introduction of Leo sends Boyd's life into, well, a tailspin. And it's this downward spiral that Biggs conveys with such understated emotion and detail. Elements like the rubber duck in the birdcage in Boyd's apartment might mean little at the time but become clear later or upon re-reading.

Biggs ultimately does provide resolution, one that's brilliant in its simplicity and ambiguity. Of course, fans who read this graphic novel when it was published a few years ago already know this. Those who haven't, though, owe it to themselves to check out this brilliantly constructed story. Those interested should also be on the lookout for the new animated adaptation, available from Top Shelf in February.



reviewed by **Jim Johnson**
www.topshelfcomix.com; ISBN 1-891830-12-0

The Invisible Frontier — NBM

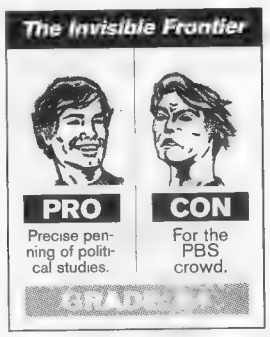
$15.95, color, 64 pgs., available now
Creators: Francois Schuiten, Benoit Peters
reviewed by **Oliver Chin**

In the make-believe world of Sodrovno-Voldachia, eager Roland De Cremer follows in his great-uncle's footsteps and starts a new job as a government cartographer. Inside a huge domed center located in the midst of parched desolation, Roland quickly learns the ropes. His crusty manager Mister Paul instructs him to interpret maps within the context of history, a lesson he soon will have to learn all too well.

The interests between the ivory world of academia and the real world of politi-

cians must inevitably collide. Their nation's leader, Marshal Radisic, intends to enlarge his country's borders by affirming the territorial legitimacy of a "Great Sodrovnia." As Roland falls in love with Shkodra, a house prostitute who conceals strange map-like tattoos, how will this institute of mapmaking be manipulated to justify a Machiavellian military mission?

Authors Francois Schuiten and Benoit Peeters create an elaborate allegory of how Serbia's leaders recently justified waging war with its Yugoslavian neighbors. In the spirit of geography, the architecturally underpinned art is painstakingly rendered. Though the subject matter may be too dry and methodical for the tastes of action-oriented readers, a solid groundwork has been laid for an intriguing conclusion.



www.nbmpub.com

Courtney Crumrin and the Coven of Mystics #1 — Oni Press

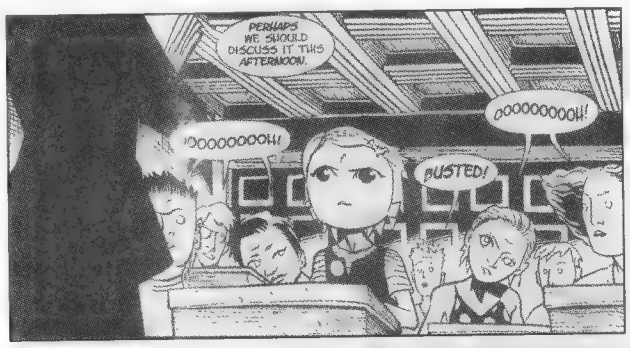
$2.95, b/w, 32 pgs., available now
Writer and artist: Ted Naifeh
reviewed by **Jack Abramowitz**

Courtney Crumrin is Oni's answer to Harry Potter. (What was the question?)

An elementary school student, Courtney is learning magic from her uncle Aloysius, a powerful and respected wizard. Her classmates fear her; they do not appear to be aware of her magical abilities but they are probably attuned to the fact that there is something different about her. Her teacher Ms. Crisp is another story, however.

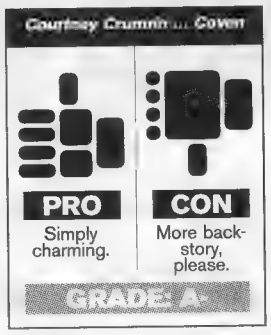
Naifeh writes and illustrates the chronicles of the poor little witch girl. The story is charming, and the art is an appropriate combination of cutesy and creepy. Courtney's classmates are fairly Dorkinesque, though she herself favors an alien from *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, thanks to unnaturally huge eyes and no visible nose.

Unlike Potter, this comic book lacks any kind of catch-up for the newcomer. It's easy enough to follow,



but it would be beneficial to understand exactly how Courtney came to be studying magic and why exactly her peers are wary of her.

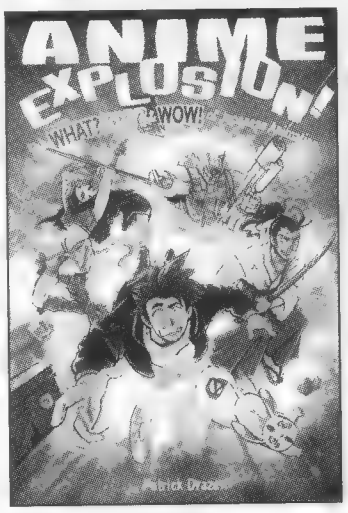
While this issue is the first installment of a four-issue mini-series, it does have a satisfactory conclusion. Readers will return because they want to, not because they were left hanging.



www.onipress.com

Anime Explosion! — Stone Bridge Press

$18.95, b/w, 369 pgs., available now
Writer: Patrick Drazen
reviewed by **Brent Frankenhoff**

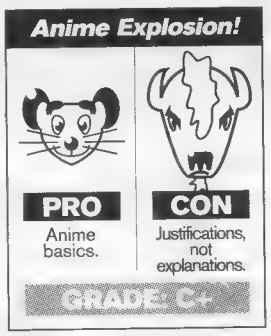


Subtitled *The What? Why? & Wow! of Japanese Animation*, this book attempts to boil down everything there is to know about Japanese animation into one volume.

Drazen's intent is good, and the chapters do give both the seasoned and novice anime viewer a basic grounding in the themes of anime. But Drazen's attempts to pooh-pooh criticism of clichés by explaining why they're included in so much anime just don't work. His explanations often turn into justifications, especially when dealing with sexual themes and nudity.

The book also makes such broad generalizations as Drazen's belief that any comic book not approved by the Comics Code Authority is an "underground comic book." Also, he doesn't believe in Spoiler Warnings, taking delight in ruining the endings of many anime classics. A more professional writer would have included Spoiler Warnings or written around the endings, saving those treats for readers who, interested in the material, would actually take the time to seek it out and view it. There's no reason to after reading this book.

Reasonably priced, this is a basic introduction to anime but not much more.



www.stonebridge.com
ISBN: 1-880656-72-8

SERIES SPOTLIGHT

C'MON..
I CAN SEE THE HEADLINES NOW
"MISSING GIRL'S BODY FOUND VIOLATED AND SLAIN IN THE BASEMENT APARTMENT OF KIDNAPPING ONLINE SEXUAL PREDATOR"

***Kissing Chaos: Nonstop Beauty* #1-2** Oni

$2.95@, b/w, 32 pgs.@, available now
Writer and artist: Arthur Dela Cruz

There are two elements that are common in many clear, understandable stories: One is a firm establishment of the characters and situations; the other is telling the story in a linear fashion.

Take one away from an otherwise good story, and at worst there remains a good story that could have been better; take both away, and the result is *Kissing Chaos*.

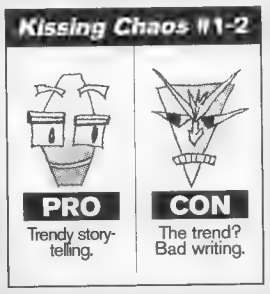
If Dela Cruz had chosen to adhere to at least one of these elements, this sequel might have had a chance at life.

But, at its halfway point, it remains on life support, as it struggles trying to make some kind of sense.

Which it just begins to near the end of the second issue — but by this time many may have already called for a mercy killing.

For what it's worth, one character has a real-life meeting with an Internet chat-buddy, who seems to have information about the recent disappearance of her friend.

This may or may not be related to some kind of trouble that a group is planning at a nightclub. And the scene continuously shifts back and forth in time between these events. Oy.



Making things worse is the normally likable drawing style. His murky, through-a-smoky-room approach is unflatteringly symbolic of his story: foggy and hard to make out.

Failing to understand the difference between a challenging story and an indecipherable one, he falls into a trend followed by all too many writers nowadays.

If readers are truly looking for chaos, then here it is.

Jim Johnson

www.onipress.com

GRADE: D

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From CBG #1523 and #1524

Athena Inc. Agents Roster	A-
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Billi 99 TPB	B-
Birds of Prey # 0	C+
Black Hole #10	B+
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Days like This GN	A
Digital Fantasy Painting	B-
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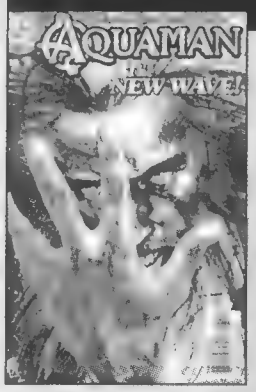
FF: Unstable Molecules #1	C
Far from Saints #1	A-
Forlorn Funnies #1	A+
Gotham Central #1	B+
Hate Annual #3	B+
Iron Wok Jan! Vol. 1	B-
Judge Dredd Megazine #17	B
The Legion #14	B
Mecha Mania	C+
Raijin Comics #1-4	B
Rebel Visions	A+
Red Prowling Devil Vol. 1	B-
Tech Jacket #1-2	A-
Wonder Woman 80-Page Giant #1	B-

COMICS GUIDE

By Maggie Thompson

Aquaman #1 — DC



Rick Veitch, Yvel Guichet, Mark Propst, color, 40 pgs.plus annoying wrestling ad, $2.50, now available.

[It's intriguing just how much advertising is now being inserted in comics. Sometimes, the new approach comes in booklet form, as here; sometimes, it's different paper inserted in binding. The different paper, for some reason, isn't as hugely annoying as the booklet, which actually affects how the comic-book pages fall.] Retailers have singled out the three comics considered this week; those store staffers have been commenting approvingly on eager customer reactions to the series. Sampling a recent issue of each seemed in order.

Aquaman is the kick-off of a new take on the character, and reports have it selling well. Maybe that's because of what the cover reflects: the issue's concluding panel (and hooray for that development). In the main focus of the initial story arc, "The New Wave," the character is going through fairly traditional suffering, as he's removed from the water and facing increasing dehydration in "Castaway!" It can't be easy creating interesting stories about a super-hero whose Silver Age tensions used to focus almost entirely on his dry-land limitations rather than his abilities. While this installment does the same, the resolution is powerful and entertaining, and it's a promising beginning.

www.dccomics.com

Green Arrow #19 — DC

Brad Meltzer, Phil Hester, Ande Parks, color, 32 pgs. p.a.w.a. and glossy gaming ad, $2.50, now available

This is Part Four of Six of a post-Kevin-Smith story arc, and retailers say the series' happy readers are continuing to support the title. From his debut in the Golden Age (Nov 1941, *More Fun* #73), Green Arrow was *not* one of the primo costumed heroes. In fact, he became a star only when Neal Adams and Denny O'Neil provided a fresh take on the character and his relationship to the world, his sidekick — and Green Lantern. Smith maneuvered the character into a fascinating new direction, and the adventures continue to entertain readers

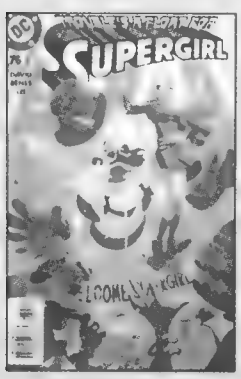
Extricating this storyline from "The Obsidian Age" experienced by The JLA, the story is set before that adventure and involves interchanges between the revived Oliver Queen and his buddies, catching them up with his current problems. "Kyle," he says, "it's like someone showing up at your house on Halloween dressed as your dead best friend." The story features visceral, clear, thought-provoking communication. And Meltzer has come up with fresh handling on some long-term problems for the character. The story is lively and continues to provide insights in the mix of Green Lantern with Justice League compatriots. The fun keeps on coming.

www.dccomics.com

Supergirl #76 — DC

Peter David, Ed Benes, Alex Lei, 40 pgs. and 8 pgs of glossy-stock ads, $2.50, available now.

It's official (see Captain Comics on Page 38) that this title is done for, but response to this series, too, has been positive, with customer interest suddenly captured by the introduction of a character named (ta daa!) Kara' Zor-El. So how *is* the title, as it winds down? David's easy, conversational writing works beautifully, and the powerful Kara (the only power she lacks is, as Supergirl gripes, "the power of a ninth-grade science education") is appealing. In fact, the whole *story* is appealing, as David provides an adventure telling a story that parallels writer Otto Binder's Silver Age introduction of Supergirl. The luscious art supports an adventure involving two gorgeous teen heroines and two powerfully muscled super-guys — not to mention some goony fun Mxyzptlk provides (maintaining the Silver Age feel). It's pretty doggoned accessible to older fans and fun for younger ones. It'll be sad to see this one go.



www.dccomics.com

Superboy #147 — Replica Edition — DC

$6.95, color, 80 pgs., available now

Writers: E. Nelson Bridwell, Jerry Siegel, Robert Bernstein

Artists: Pete Costanza, Curt Swan, Jim Mooney, George Papp

reviewed by **Brett Weiss**

HOLD ON! WHO IS THIS RIDING THE RODS OF A BOX CAR? IT CERTAINLY LOOKS LIKE MEEK CLARK KENT! BUT CAN IT BE CLARK KENT?
I MADE A PERFECT ESCAPE FROM THE REFORMATORY AND THEY'LL NEVER GET ME BACK! FROM HERE ON, I PLAY IT SMART!

Years before writer Paul Levitz and artist Keith Giffen transformed *The Legion of Super-Heroes* into a sophisticated, substantive comic-book series, the super-group was saddled with juvenile stories that forced readers to suspend their disbelief to the breaking point.

Entire plots hinged on impossible coincidences, such as a Clark Kent look-alike ending up in Smallville, and ridiculous premises, such as Ultra-Boy risking the life of Pete Ross to uncover Superboy's secret identity.

Despite (and often because of) the outrageousness of these tales, they are charming and entertaining, especially for fans of Silver Age material longing for the silly, kid-friendly stories edited by the late Mort Weisinger.

This replica edition reprints *Superboy* #147 (Jun 68), which was an 80-page giant containing "the untold story of how the Legion got its start" along with five reprints of Legion of Super-Heroes stories from the early 1960s.

Several key issues are featured, including *Adventure Comics* #293, which was the debut of The Legion of Super-Pets, and *Action Comics* #276, which introduced six new Legionnaires and told of how Supergirl joined The Legion.

Superman co-creator Jerry Siegel wrote four of the stories, and definitive Superman artist Curt Swan drew three, making the issue highly readable and pleasant to look at, and the rest of the talents involved (including artist Jim Mooney and writer E. Nelson Bridwell) blend right in, giving the issue a cohesive look and feel.

This is a nice package, and kudos should once again go to DC for keeping this type of material in print.

www.dccomics.com

The Red Star Annual #1 — Hearogic Studios

$3.50, color, 40 pgs., available now
Writers: Christian Gossett, Bradley Kayl; Artist: Gossett
reviewed by **Steve Horton**

The Red Star has won accolades and many fans since its debut in June 2000. It's a futuristic Cold War allegory concerning a dystopian called The United Republics of the Red Star and those who rebel against it. The annual is an introduction to the world for first-timers, as well as a terrific Done in One story, taking place before *The Red Star* #6.

One of the most interesting protagonists in the series thus far is Makita, a rebel from Nogorka, a country fighting against the URRS' regime. Makita is on a mission for her father, and it sends her into enemy territory, running and dodging all the way. The art is as stunning as ever, combining computer-assisted images with traditional pencil work. The only problem with the art is that it's composed of far too many splash pages: 10 in 42 pages of story. Pages 2 and 3, 4 and 5, and 6 and 7 are three sets of double splash pages showing a frame-by-frame sequence of Makita running. Comic books are not animation, and this sequence could have been done easily in two pages.

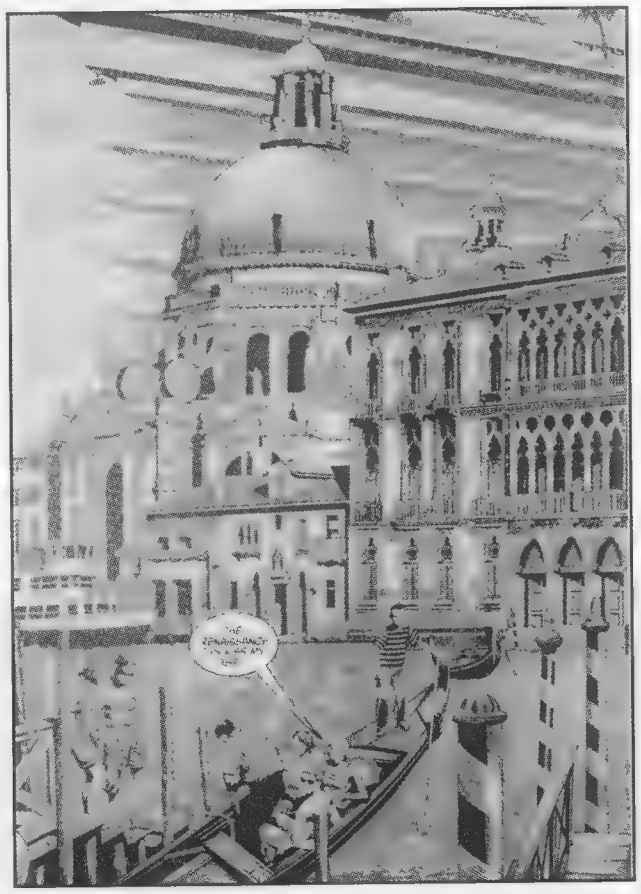
$3.50 seems like a lot to pay for a comic book, but there are 40 pages, with two extra pages of story on the inside front and back covers, and no ads. That's 8¢ per story page, compared to 10¢ a story page for an average Marvel comic book. Those interested in either science fiction or the rise and fall of communism, or both, will enjoy this series, and with CrossGen taking over publication through the CG Entertainment imprint, *The Red Star* isn't going away for a long time. www.theredstar.com

The Filth #7 — DC/Vertigo

$2.95, color, 36 pgs., available now
Writer: Grant Morrison; Artists: Chris Wesson, Gary Erskine
reviewed by **Rob Salkowitz**

The Filth — Morrison's 13-issue Vertigo mini-series — is self-indulgent, profane, gratuitously perverse, and often confusing. If those things bother you, you should probably look elsewhere for your comic-book entertainment. If, however, you're up to the challenge of following one of the medium's most imaginative creators on his most ambitious project to date, *The Filth* #7 is an excellent point of entry.

In the first six issues, Morrison set up his Burroughsian (William S., not Edgar Rice) cosmic cops-and-robbers story, showing the recruitment (actually re-enlistment) of Greg Feely, aka Officer Slade, into an interdimensional police organization known as The Hand. After a disorienting initiation and a few run-ins with giant insects on other planets, Slade and his colorful crew toppled the sex empire of Tex Porneau and brought an end to the first half of the story arc.



Familiarity with this backstory is helpful but not essential in approaching *The Filth* #7. The story opens in Venice, where Libertania, an enormous floating city, looms in the background behind the Renaissance façade. Libertania was designed as a utopia but is experiencing social strife and is ready to explode. All it takes is the introduction of the drug-addled United States president, arriving for a state visit, to push things over the edge into chaos. Meanwhile, Feely-Slade is still stuck at the police station, answering dicey questions about his past. That's about as straightforward as this series gets, story-wise, and Wesson and Erskine's spectacular art make the issue a treat for the eyes as well as the brain.

The Filth is Morrison at his fever-dream finest, on a par with his groundbreaking work on *Doom Patrol* and *The Invisibles*. Few other writers have earned the right to be as baffling, demanding, obscure, and sometimes alarmingly pretentious, but Morrison delivers the goods with an exciting, engaging, conceptually rich story. *The Filth* is one of the most interesting mainstream series on the stands, and, if you've been waiting for the right time to hop on board, this is as good a chance as you're likely to get.

www.dccomics.com

Story of the Tao #1 — ComicsOne

$13.95, color, 120 pgs., available now
Writer: Ding Kin Lau; Artist: Andy Seto
reviewed by **Oliver Chin**

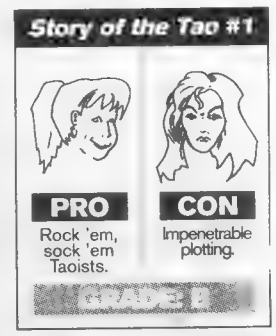
In the videogame tradition of relentless fisticuffs and soul-shattering body blows, comes this story of the travels of Datura, a boy destined to become the next Buddha.

His father, Master Man, confers on him the mantle of becoming the leader of the Warrior Buddhist Sect and the destiny to unite the other three religious orders — Taoism, Mysticism, and Shingon — against the evil Queen Arctic. Along the way, naturally, comes a slew of cacophonous combat.

Meanwhile, the sly teen-age girl Zhu and her disciples battle her sinister brother "Death Sovereign" and his crew of the undead. How can she live up to her nickname of "Evil Taoist," if she allows Death three unanswered strikes against her? Elsewhere, can Datura save a beautiful princess from being kidnapped by the tricky YinYang?

Typical of Hong Kong comics, the fighting characters look great. However, you'll get as dizzy as they, if you try to follow the convoluted storyline, unless you're an East Asian scholar. Like fans of rollercoasters and arcade action, if you can forget about your destination, you're more likely to enjoy the ride.

www.comicsone.com



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Jim Johnson

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Steve Horton

Steve Horton is a copy editor for the Watertown Daily Times in Watertown,
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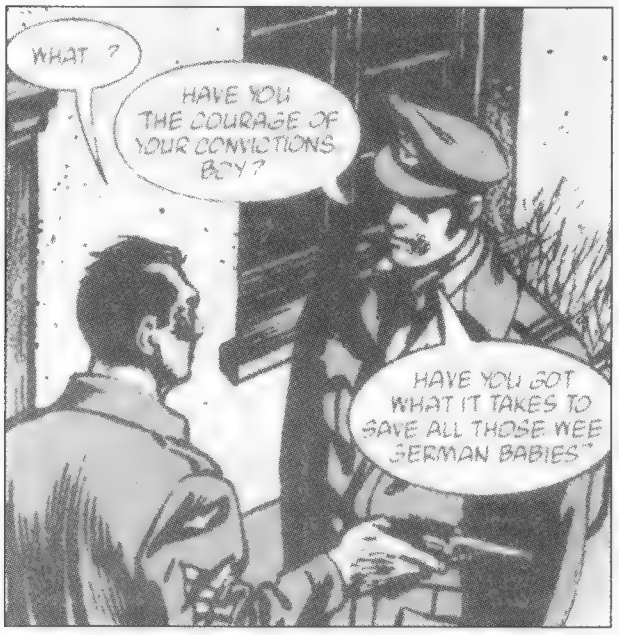
reference to "Pow! Biff! Bam!" in headlines.
Review copies toSteve Horton, 150 Clinton St. D1, Watertown, NY 13601

War Story: J for Jenny — DC/Vertigo

$4.95, color, 56 pgs., available now
Writer: Garth Ennis; Artist: David Lloyd
reviewed by **S.A. Bennett**

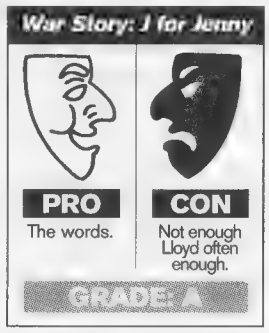
Over the decades, Americans have struggled with the morality of intentionally targeting German civilians during World War II (best exemplified by the bombing of Dresden), and from our safe distance it seems an impossibly brutal business that uncomfortably blurs the line between "us" and "them."



But things appear a bit different from the vantage point of the British, who suffered years of German bombing. At this comic book's core is the moral question: Can we do it to them because they did it to us?

Characters take different sides, and polite conversation soon becomes open debate, then a shouting match that descends into a slagging one (rich with the invective of the British Isles), but we're never spoon-fed easy answers. And, while there's plenty of action, aerial and otherwise (beautifully staged by the transcendent David Lloyd, who uses a limited color palette to amazing advantage), be warned this comic book is mostly talk. The sort that elevates the medium.

www.dccomics.com



Hard Looks: Adapted Stories TPB — Dark Horse

$14.95, b/w, 208 pgs., available now
Writer: Andrew Vachss; Artist: Various
reviewed by **Oliver Chin**

For those who can't get enough of the urban gloom provided by the television series *Murder One*, *Homicide*, and *NYPD Blue*, this collection of illustrated crime stories is for you. Trolling the dark side of human nature, fiction writer Vachss remorselessly serves up raw servings of grief, misery, and perversity.

A decade ago, Dark Horse adapted Vachss' 20-plus tales into graphic interludes by a number of writers and illustrators, such as Neal Barrett Jr. and Gary Gianni. Topics run the gamut of suffering: an upwardly mobile gangbanger miscalculates in "Drive By," an actress discovers that phone sex is dangerous in "Replay," and a mysterious stranger targets AIDS and vampires in "Half Breed #1: Death Trap."

Dredging the street gutters for pearls of pain, Vacchs' words hits readers' hot buttons like hard punches to the gut. Alternately titillating and sensationalistic, this set loses steam about halfway through, as the pervasive pessimism and gloomy scenery takes their toll on the attention span.

www.darkhorse.com

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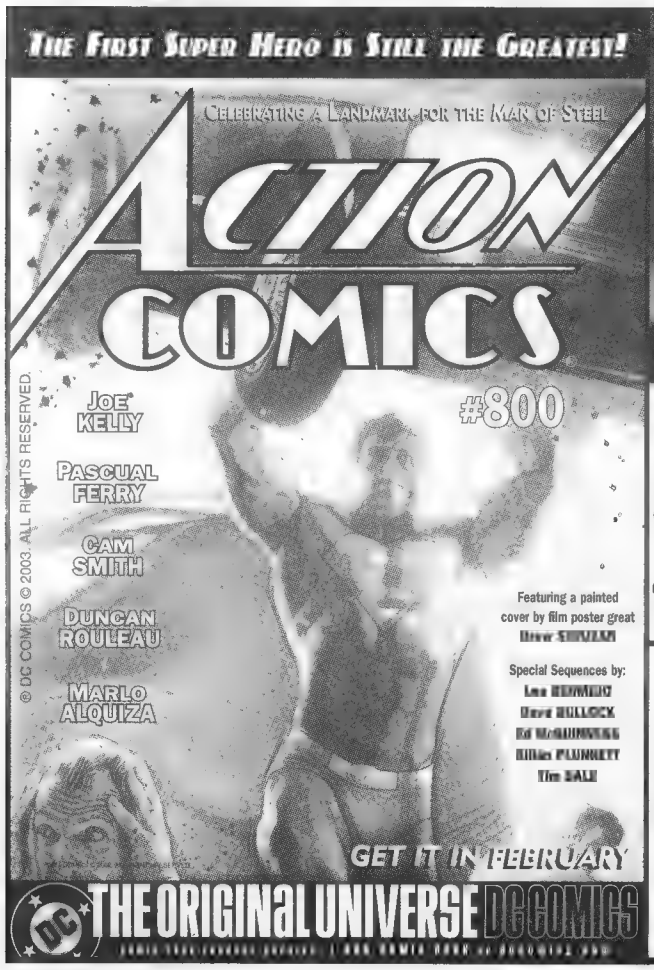
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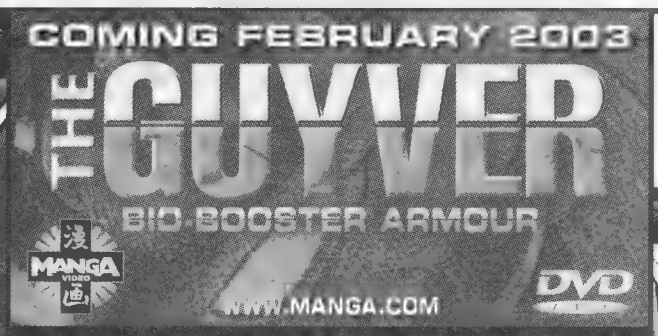

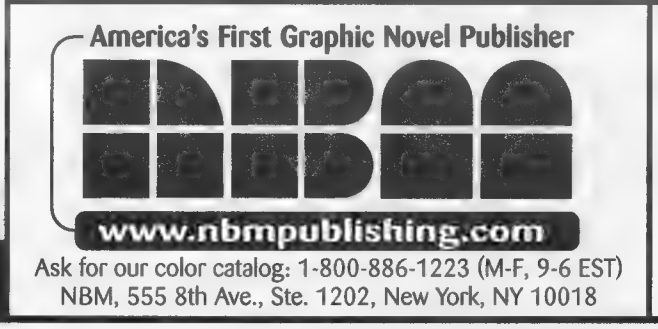
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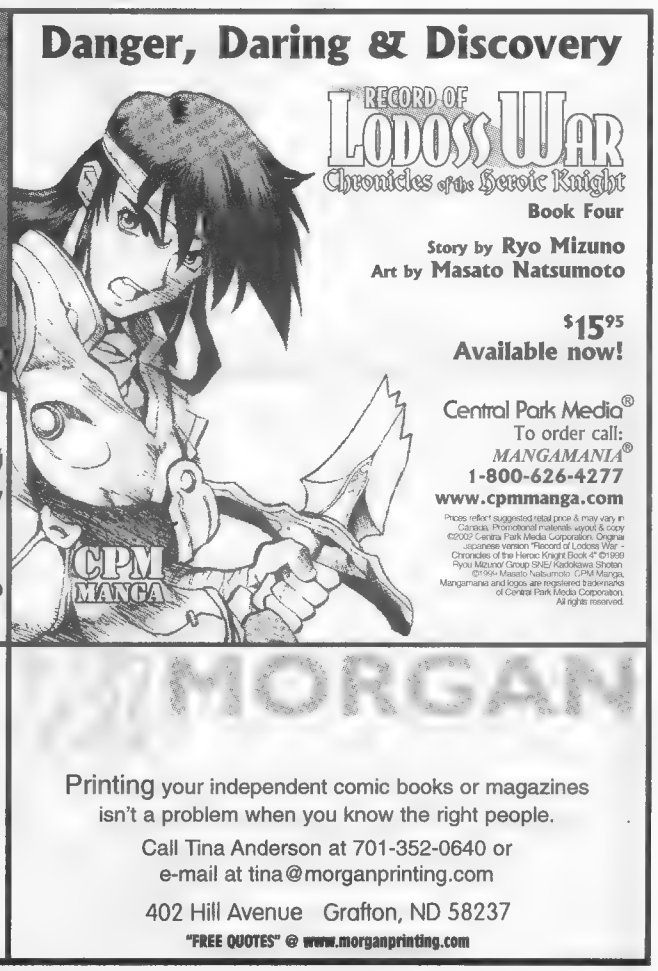

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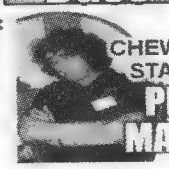

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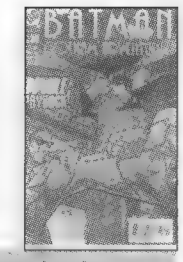
BACK ISSUES

CBG's weekly nostalgia celebration!

*"At **CBG**, we recognize that the classic comics of yesteryear are why most of us got into comics in the first place. It's our mission to celebrate those comics by reminding you of great characters and stories, presenting insights into what creators had in mind, and searching out affordable reprints!"*

Canceled Comics Cavalcade claims column!

The Captain sounds Taps for several DC series.
Dear Captain, Page 38



The creators, characters, and series people are STILL talking about today!

FLASHBACK

10 years ago

DC announced that four different characters, each claiming to be the real Man of Steel, would appear in the Superman titles .

The license for monthly Disney comics returned to Gladstone following production of material under the "Disney Comics" imprint.

Classics International Entertainment acquired **Mike and Lori Raub**'s Dream Factory comics chain in the Northeast. The firm announced plans for a national chain of 100 comics stores by the year's end. (The chain peaked at under 30 stores a year later, before being beset with legal problems and the industry's general malaise.)

15 years ago

After his own comics retail trade magazine *Comics Business* folded after five issues, **Dave Olbrich** brought part of that magazine's editorial content into the pages of ***CBG***.

DC celebrated Superman's 50th birthday Feb. 26, 1988, at the Puck Building in SoHo with a display of Superman memorabilia; a retrospective slide show; a video presentation of the Superman movie serials, movies, and cartoons; a gigantic birthday cake; and a replica key to the Fortress of Solitude. New York Mayor **Ed Koch** led the festivities, which were broken into three 90-minute parties to accomodate the crowds.

20 years ago

Comico launched four black-and-white titles, including **Matt Wagner**'s *Grendel*; and Capital's launch of **Mike Baron**'s *Badger*.

CBG ONLINE!

Subscribers! *Read the latest issue of **CBG** online every Thursday! Visit **www.collect.com/issues.asp** to log in and follow the instructions on the site.*

"Maharajah Donald" to be giveaway again

1947 classic Barks story kicks off new Disney comics line

By **Nathan Melby**

Since its 1947 appearance, the fourth issue of the giveaway series *March of Comics* has only been reprinted twice, once in Another Rainbow's hardcover anthology series of Carl Barks' work, once in *The Carl Barks Library of Walt Disney's Donald Duck Adventures in Color* #6.

Now it's scheduled to return to its origins — as Disney Comics' contribution to the second Free Comic Book Day industry promotion, scheduled for May 3.

Disney Comics is an imprint of Gemstone Publishing and has put on its schedule the reprint of Carl Barks' classic tale "Maharajah Donald" for the industry-wide event.

Disney Comics Editor in Chief John Clark told ***CBG***, "We came to the decision to use a reprint of *March of Comics* #4 for Free Comic Book Day, because it was *originally* a giveaway comic book.

"We were talking about Free Comic Book Day and decided to participate late in the process. Once we'd decided it would be a good idea, we were rather restrained by material we were able to put together quickly. I was able to get stories from the archives easily, and this was one story we *knew* would work."

At this early stage in the process of preparing the comic book for publication, Clark estimated that the edition's print run will be around 50,000 and said he hoped that there would be enough copies produced to allow for extras to give away at conventions. He estimated that the printing costs alone will be around $15,000.

Gemstone will bring back two monthly Disney titles in June. The announcement, cited in ***CBG*** #1520, said that the company will produce new 64-page prestige-format editions reprinting stories from *Walt Disney's Uncle Scrooge*, *Donald Duck Adventures*, and *Walt Disney's Comics & Stories*.

Clark said of the giveaway project that choosing "Marahajah Donald" had not been merely a matter of its being easy to find in the archives. "It is one of Barks' most classic stories. We searched our brains for something that is well-regarded as classic and would be valuable to readers."

The 28-page story was published five years into Barks' run of Duck stories and took Donald and his nephews on an ocean trip to India, where they encountered the Maharajah of Hoopadoola and found themselves on an expedition to the jungle kingdom of Bumpay — with complications the four hadn't dreamed of when they'd left home. ✦

AH! MY FRIENDS, YOU LOOK CAPABLE OF DOING GREAT THINGS THIS MORNING!
GREAT THINGS, BUT NOTHING DANGEROUS!
GENTLEMEN! THE FAVOR I'M ASKING IS THAT YOU RIDE THAT OLD ELEPHANT ACROSS THE RIVER INTO THE KINGDOM OF BUMPAY!
BUT THERE'S NOTHING OVER THERE BUT JUNGLE!
THE ELEPHANT IS HEADING FOR THE PALACE GATE!
HE MUST HAVE BEEN HERE BEFORE!
© 2003 The Walt Disney Company

Donald, Huey, Dewey, and Louie found themselves in the midst of a wild adventure in "Maharajah Donald."

B **INSIDE THIS SECTION**

● **Ask Mr. Silver Age** by Craig Shutt.....30 | ● **Dear Captain** by Andrew Smith.....38

A light(ning) touch

Writer Geoff Johns takes on team titles and solo heroes

By **George Nelson**

Many of Geoff Johns' comic books may be dark at times, but he said he really prefers books and characters with a lighter touch.

"I thought *Stars and S.T.R.I.P.E.* would be sort of a cross between the early run of *Superboy* that Kesel and Grummett did and *Starman*, and I like those bright, vibrant characters," Johns said of his first series for DC Comics. Johns had been in New York working as an assistant director on the Mel Gibson-Julia Roberts film *Conspiracy Theory* and got to talking about comics with people from DC.

"They said, 'You should pitch us something,' and I did, and that was *Stars and S.T.R.I.P.E.*," he recalled. "They bought it and it sort of snowballed from there."

That snowball currently includes three series — *Flash, JSA* (which he co-writes with David Goyer), and *Hawkman* for DC and his most recent addition, *Avengers*, for Marvel. Later this year, he will relaunch The Teen Titans in a new series.

Johns said there are key differences between his two current team series, *JSA* and *Avengers*.

"The Avengers are the people everyone calls first," he explained. "If it's an emergency, they call The Avengers. If there's any kind of problem at all, The Avengers handle it. That's their role. You don't call The New Warriors or even The FF.

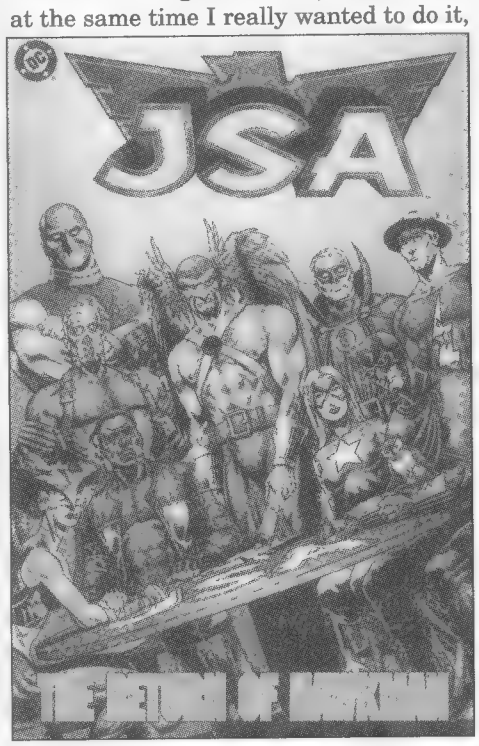
"In *JSA*, it's all about legacy. It's about helping heroes become better heroes, carrying on the tradition of heroics."

The legacy concept also was a key concept in *Stars and S.T.R.I.P.E.* — with a girl taking on the role of The Star-Spangled Kid and reluctantly partnering with her stepfather, the original Stripsey — as well as *Flash*, with the title character, Wally West, continuing in the footsteps of his mentor, the Silver Age Flash.

"We don't talk about Barry Allen every issue, obviously, but that is partly what motivates him," Johns said.

Johns said he was a fan of his predecessor on the book, writer Mark Waid.

"Flash is one of my favorite characters, and that's what made it my favorite book, so it was very intimidating," he said of following Waid on the series. "But at the same time I really wanted to do it, so I guess really wanting to do it overshadowed any intimidation I had. I just tried to mine things that I didn't think had been mined yet. He had obviously nailed Wally West as a character, he had made him grow a lot. I thought bringing The Rogues back and making them a central focus would be cool, and redefining Keystone City would be interesting. We've got a lot of other things coming up that continue to make the series evolve."



On the other hand, Johns said he hadn't been intimidated by the prospect of relaunching Hawkman, a character that has often involved continuity problems.

"We were really confident with our take on Hawkman. It's been a lot of fun so far," he said. "There's always going to be bumps and stuff along the way but that's true with any character. You can't worry about continuity that much. Once you sort of have the character back and can understand him, you've got to move forward and just tell the best adventures you can tell with that character." Upcoming stories include a "dramatic shift" in the relationship between Hawkman and Hawkgirl, as well as the return of the Hawkwoman from Thanagar and the old Hawkman foe, The Gentleman Ghost.

Johns also expressed enthusiasm about the upcoming relaunch of *Titans*, which will feature several of the characters introduced by Marv Wolfman and George Pérez in their own 1980 revival of the title.

"You could tell they really put a lot of energy and love in that book," he said. "They made them real and they gave them problems. For the first time, the characters felt like people instead of icons. I don't remember the last time a team that introduced so many new characters was so successful." ✦

JANUARY 2003
Trade Paperback and Graphic Novel Preorders by Comic Shops

These figures are for estimated preorders of trade paperbacks and graphic novels through Diamond Comic Distributors.

The number in the right-most column indicates the number of copies preordered in thousands.

1	*30 Days of Night* TPB	IDW	6
2	*Ult. Daredevil & Elektra* TPB	Marvel	6
3	*Daredevil Legends* Vol 1	Marvel	5
4	*Daredevil Movie* TPB	Marvel	5
5	*Robotech Macross Saga* Vol 1 TPB	DC	4
6	*Love Hina* Vol 9 GN	Tokyopop	4
7	*JLA: The Golden Perfect*	DC	4
8	*Hellblazer Haunted* TPB	DC	4
9	*Chobits* Vol 4 GN	Tokyopop	3
10	*Oh My Goddess Hand In Hand Tp*	Dk Horse	3
11	*Uncanny X-Men: Hope* TPB	Marvel	3
12	*Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon* GN #2	Comicsone	3
13	*Lone Wolf 2100 Shadows on Saplings* TPB	Dk Horse	3
14	*Birds of Prey Old Friends New Enemies* TPB	DC	3
15	*Punisher: Business As Usual* TPB	Marvel	3
16	*Wolverine Legends Vol 1 Wolverine Hulk* TPB	Marvel	3
17	*Astro Boy* Vol 12 TPB	Dk Horse	3
18	*Ranma 1/2* Vol 21 TPB	Viz	3
19	*Captain America Vol 1 New Deal* HC	Marvel	3
20	*Transformers* GN *Legacy Of Unicron*	Titan	3
21	*Aquaman Archives* Vol 1	DC	3
22	*Daredevil Elektra Love & War* HC	Marvel	3
23	*Forge #*10	CrossGen	3
24	*Edge #*10	CrossGen	3
25	*Flash Rogues* TPB	DC	2
26	*G.I. Joe Battle Files Ultimate Source Book* TPB	Image	2
27	*Green Lantern Emerald Dawn* TPB New Ed.	DC	2
28	*GTO* Vol 10 GN	Tokyopop	2
29	*GTO* Vol 9 GN	Tokyopop	2
30	*What's Michael Fat Cat* TPB	Dk Horse	2

Source: Diamond Comic Distributors

BIRTHDAYS and INDUSTRY EVENTS

Mon 3 FEB

CBG #1527 ships

Born on this date:
Byron Erickson
Richard Marschall (1949)
Tim A. Conrad (1951)
Randy Lofficier (1953) – **50** years ago

Tue 4 FEB

Born on this date:
Dez Skinn (1951)
Scott Saavedra (1960)
Tom Sniegoski (1962)
Francis J. Mao (1966)

Wed 5 FEB

Born on this date:
George Evans (1920)
Jess M. Jodloman (1925)
Marty Pahls (1941)
Val Semeiks (1955)
Mark Bloodworth (1963) – **40** years ago

New Comics Day! Scheduled to ship:

CrossGen: *First* #28, *Mystic* #33, *Way of the Rat* #10

Dark Horse: *Oh My Goddess!* #95, *Star Wars: Empire* #6

DC: *100 Bullets* #42, *Hawkman* #12, *Robotech* #3

Image: *Jack Staff* #1, *Micronauts* #5, *Venture* #2

Marvel: *Alias* #19, *Elektra* #21, *Thor* #59

Thu 6 FEB

Born on this date:
Richard Buckler (1949)

Fri 7 FEB

Born on this date:
Richard Bruning (1953) – **50** years ago
Miguel Ferrer (1955)
Bob Camp (1956)
Paul Castiglia (1966)

Sat 8 FEB

Born on this date:
Terry Stewart

Sun 9 FEB

Born on this date:
Frank Frazetta (1928) – **75** years ago
Danny Bulanadi (1946)
Jo Duffy (1954)
Timothy Truman (1956)
Sarah E. Byam (1962)
T.C. Ford (1964)
Whitney Barber (1975)

A DC costume quiz

Get your pencils back out, boys and girls — it's pop quiz time again!

Dear Mr. Silver Age,

I enjoyed your pop quiz on Marvel comics super-heroes' costumes last week. (These issues are getting to me faster and faster all the time.) Do you also know as much about DC costumes?

Paul G.
Central City

Mr. Silver Age says: Boy, howdy, *do* I, Paul. Virtually every super-hero out there has secrets attached to his costume's origin, and DC's heroes weren't any different. Last week's Marvel quiz was a bit unusual in that every answer was the same letter and was nearly too goofy for words.

Fortunately, Mr. Silver Age always manages to find the words to describe goofy. It's a gift. This week's quiz has a bit more variety than that one, just to make it tougher.

So get out your pencils and put your puzzlers on, because it's pop-quiz time again.

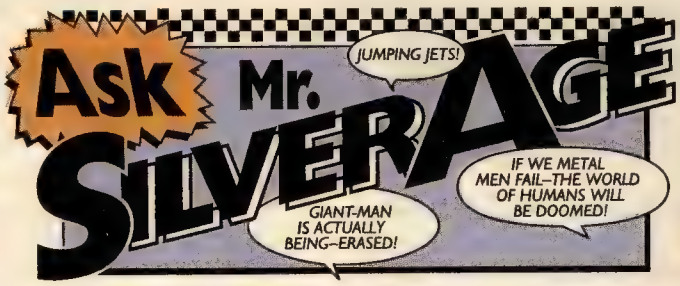
1. *How did the Kents learn that Clark's baby blankets were indestructible?*
a. The blankets didn't tear when the rocket crashed.
b. The blankets didn't burn when the attic caught fire.
c. Pa Kent accidentally stabbed one with his pitchfork.
d. Jor-El told Kal about them in a taped message.

2. *Who created the original concept for Bruce Wayne's Batman costume?*
a. Alfred the butler.
b. Bruce's father.
c. Bruce himself.
d. Aunt Harriet.

3. *Who designed Kid Flash's second costume?*
a. Kid Flash.
b. The Flash.
c. Iris West.
d. Wonder Girl.

I BROUGHT OUT MY CHILDHOOD SUPER-PLAYSUIT!"
IT'S TOO SMALL FOR ME, NOW, BUT I'LL UNRAVEL IT AND ADD IT TO THE LEFT-OVER SUPER-YARN! THEN I'LL HAVE ENOUGH TO MAKE ME A BIGGER COSTUME!

Young Clark Kent used the thread from his baby playsuit to make his costume in* Superboy *#78. How'd he know the thread was indestructible?



By **Craig Shutt**

4. *What made Green Lantern decide to wear a mask?*
a. A villain's discovery of his identity.
b. His predecessor's trouble with his unmasked identity.
c. Its protection of his face against wind resistance.
d. A dream he had about his costume.

5. *What made The Flash decide to wear a mask?*
a. A villain's discovery of his identity.
b. His predecessor's trouble with his unmasked identity.
c. Its protection of his face against wind resistance.
d. A dream he had about his costume.

Answers:

1. *How did the Kents learn that Clark's baby blankets were indestructible?*

Answer: b. They didn't burn when the attic caught fire.

The origin of Superboy's super-costume is well-known to Silver Age fans, although let's not dwell on that part about Ma Kent *knitting* the super-suit (since she couldn't pierce the material) and then unraveling and reknitting it each time Superboy grew an inch until he was Superman. That's a lot of knitting. Instead, let's consider why she used the baby blankets in the first place.

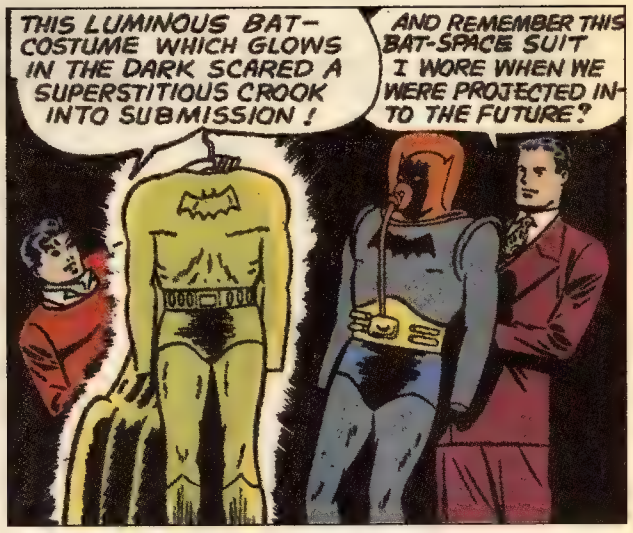
The reason was revealed in the catchily named "The Origin of Superboy's Super-Costume!" in *Superboy* #78 (Jan 60). After watching baby Kal day after day rip up his playsuits while being rammed by bulls and run over by tractors (are these good parents or what?), Ma and Pa were at their wits' end until Kal accidentally started a fire in the attic (when a lightning bolt was deflected from his invulnerable body).

He quickly extinguished the blaze, and Pa was shocked to discover the stored blankets were untouched. He quickly hung two on a clothesline and poked at one with his pitchfork and blasted the other with his shotgun. He then exploded dynamite under the third, all with no effect. That triple panel of experiments is a well-known image in Superboy lore, but that one of Jonathan's surprised face as he found three good-as-new blankets in the singed attic was more important overall.

2. *Who created the original concept for Bruce Wayne's Batman costume?*

Answer: b. His father.

Yes, I know, Bill Finger and Bob Kane *really* did it, but work with me here. This answer may seem like a paradox, but it isn't, when you consider that Thomas


THIS LUMINOUS BAT-COSTUME WHICH GLOWS IN THE DARK SCARED A SUPERSTITIOUS CROOK INTO SUBMISSION!
AND REMEMBER THIS BAT-SPACE SUIT I WORE WHEN WE WERE PROJECTED INTO THE FUTURE?

Batman has used many wacky costumes, as shown in* Detective Comics *#165. But who created the original concept for his Bat-costume?

Wayne was "The First Batman" as revealed in *Detective Comics* #235 (Sep 56). In that tale, Bruce and Dick were cleaning out their attic, when Dick discovered a secret drawer in Dr. Wayne's desk. Inside was a bat-like costume very similar to Batman's own except for more wing-like wings instead of a cape and a Batwoman-like mask instead of Bruce's cowl. Alongside the outfit were a film and diary. Good thing those Waynes liked to keep souvenirs around.

Running the film, The Dynamic Duo watched, as Bruce's dad won a prize for having the best costume at a "Flying Creatures" masquerade ball. Yes, that's a pretty flimsy set-up, but how *else* could they get Tom into some bat-like costume he'd created? But then a bunch of thugs kidnapped the doc, and mayhem ensued that ultimately led into an adventure by our own bat-pals.

The diary revealed that little Bruce had been fascinated by his dad's bat-costume. "I'll save it for you, Bruce, to wear when you grow up," Dr. Wayne promised. "Dick," Bruce exclaimed reading this, "when that bat flew into my room, it must have prodded my subconscious memory of my father's costume! Now I realize I adopted a Batman costume because I remembered my father wearing one!"

Well, he probably adopted *that* Batman costume for that reason, but that bat flying through the window probably sealed the deal on the general idea. I'd say we're all fortunate that he hadn't been in his garden vowing revenge when he looked down to see a slug crawl by.

3. *Who designed Kid Flash's second costume?*

Answer: b. The Flash.

Yes, I know, Carmine Infantino really did it, but he wasn't an option. Fortunately for Iris West's nephew Wally, her boyfriend Barry could channel Infantino's great sense of design. Barry created a truly cool costume after he got doused in super-speed chemicals (let's not even ask what it's made out of or how it fits into that ring), and he then simply created a smaller version of that suit for Wally, when he miraculously had the

same thing happen to him. But seeing Scarlet Speedster Senior and Junior flashing around looked a little uncreative, especially for a guy with such an apparently strong design sense.

Barry finally changed things accidentally in "Secret of the Three Super-Weapons!" in *The Flash* #135 (Mar 63). The story began with Kid Flash meeting a sexy alien, who warned him of an impending invasion. To forestall it, her people had sent Earthlings three weapons to defend themselves — but she didn't know where they'd landed. Kid Flash ran off to tell Flash and found him in Central City's Science Institute, where he was puzzling over a strange object that had just appeared.

As Kid Flash approached his mentor, Flash touched the object, and his body was filled with a powerful electric current (smooth move, Bar). He warned Wally away, but just then a lightning bolt shot out from Flash's emblem and changed Kid Flash's outfit into the yellow top-red bottom-open-haired cowl that became his signature look — and created a cool cover.

Realizing they were both fine except for that tailoring thing, Flash revealed that he'd been thinking of creating a new costume for Kid Flash, since having their uniforms look so alike could be confusing. The machine, therefore, must have carried out Barry's inner will, using his emblem's color to make the change, because it had the same frequency as the mind-over-matter current. This guy isn't a police scientist for nothing!

Frankly, I would've been a little afraid that the molecular change was too unstable to last, risking the potential that my clothes would go through strange changes right in the middle of pounding on alien invaders — or possibly disappear altogether while I was carrying around that sexy blonde alien. I guess that's why Wally was a super-hero and I'm not. On the other hand, it's probably a good thing Barry wasn't thinking about Zatanna when Wally ran into that room.

4. What made Green Lantern decide to wear a mask?

Answer: b. His predecessor's trouble with his unmasked identity.

You might not think that little domino-style green mask that Hal Jordan wore would really fool too many people who knew both The Emerald Gladiator and the ace test pilot. I mean, heck, it's not much bigger than a pair of glasses, and that would never fool ... oh, wait. Never mind.

In any event, Hal wore a mask as GL because his predecessor, Abin Sur, *hadn't* worn a mask, winding up in all kinds of trouble that ultimately helped get him killed. At least, that's the story Hal was sticking to, as we learned in "Earth's First Green Lantern!" in *Green Lantern* #16 (Oct 62), even if it doesn't really hang together very well.

Not-so-secret origins

Here's where to find these costume origins in reprint form, according to DC's #1 Trivia Geek Mark Waid:

Superboy #78 was reprinted in *Superman Annual* #8.

Detective Comics #235 was reprinted in *Batman* #255, *Batman Annual* #4, *Best of DC Digest* #2, and *Greatest Batman Stories Ever Told*.

The Flash #135 hasn't been reprinted!

Green Lantern #16 was reprinted in *GL* #87 and *DC Blue-Ribbon Digest* #5.

The story began with Hal's pal Tom saving Green Lantern from an identity-revealing crisis when he pointed out that, um, Hal was still wearing his GL mask even though he was dressed in his suit. Oops. "Whew!" Hal sighed. "That was a close one!" That's our test-pilot buddy, all right, living on the edge every minute. But Hal noted that the reason he wore a mask was to prevent what happened to Abin from recurring with him.

Tom asked for the tale, so Hal explained that he (along with Editor Julius Schwartz and most of fandom) had wondered why Abin Sur was riding in a space ship when he crash-landed on Earth in *Showcase* #22 (Oct 59). But it wasn't until after *GL* #10 (Jan 62), he said, when he discovered that his ring could tell him missing information, that he learned the details.

The reason was that an alien energy being had kidnapped Abin while he slept one night in his regular identity as a university professor. Since Mr. Sir hadn't worn a mask, it was easy for the alien to find and capture him. Powerless against this ambush, Abin tricked the alien into letting him use a spaceship to take them where the alien wanted to go, which, in turn, allowed him to recharge his battery and capture the alien (long story). But, as Abin headed home in the ship, a yellow band of radiation surrounding Earth caused him to crash and get Hal to replace him. And since having his identity known had at least indirectly caused Abin's death, Hal decided to wear a mask.

As if the alien energy being couldn't have simply followed Abin and watched him change clothes even if he'd been wearing a mask. But let's stipulate that wearing a mask is a good thing to hide your other identity and move to the more daunting question. Which is: If Hal didn't learn this story until after *GL* #10, when he asked his ring, why did we see him wearing a mask from the beginning?

Many members of The GL Corps wore masks, too (although not as many as you'd expect, given Abin's little difficulty). Maybe they were smarter than Abin and he hadn't realized the advantages, or they donned them after the fact as a tribute to the greatest GL of all, Hal Jordan.

Or maybe the ring set up Hal with a mask when it created his costume as Abin Sir died, and Hal didn't even realize he was wearing it for those early adventures, as our opening scene indicated happened sometimes. Then *GL* #10 rolled around, Hal learned how Abin crashed, he told the ring to create a mask for him, and the ring, after rolling around on the ground (figuratively) laughing for a while, said, "You bet, boss!" And GL looked in a mirror to see he was wearing a mask at last — the same one he'd been wearing since Day One without realizing it. Works for me, sort of.

5. What made The Flash decide to wear a mask?

Answer: d. A dream he had about his costume.

Not a hoax or an imaginary story, this back-up story in *The Flash* #128 (May 62) revealed "The Origin of Flash's Masked Identity!" But at least this time, the chronology has a little more plausibility than his buddy Hal could conjure up to explain his own mask, thanks to a fortuitous gap in the original origin story.

This tale took place shortly after Barry was doused with chemicals, while he was planning his super-debut, we were told. The chronology worked fine, because in his origin in "The Mystery of the Human Thunderbolt!" in *Showcase* #4 (Sep-Oct 56), Bar was doused with chemicals and then "sometime later" showed up in his spiffy costume. That covered a lot of sins, since it could have

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*There were reasons for Hal Jordan to wear a mask besides the silly bet he made with Star Sapphire in **GL** #26. Why did he war it?*

meant a year later. Barry even noted in #128 that he'd already wrapped up a few cases wearing a maskless uniform without being seen, meaning several days (probably) passed between those panels in *Showcase* #4. I'm really sorry Julie never went back and told us those tales.

However long it was, that gap gave Barry a chance to sit around reading a copy of his favorite magazine, *Flash Comics* #13 (with a different cover from our own version), and ponder the fact that his hero managed to hide his identity without using a mask. His concern technically was less about wearing a mask (since Jay Garrick vibrated his face to make it unrecognizable) and more about revealing that Barry Allen was The Flash.

The story then switched to Barry's announcement of his other identity, which obviously caused him no end of grief (although he did bask in the headlines and accolades for a brief panel). It didn't take long before he realized the swarms of people waiting for him everywhere he went, especially at work, were going to cramp his style. Geez, what a rocket scientist.

Fortunately, it was all a daydream, and Barry quickly put down his comic book and cut holes in the cowl of his uniform. What the heck that cowl had been doing there is hard to say. Sadly, why he added those funky lightning-bolt earmuffs was left to be discovered another day, which never came. But it's hard to argue with a guy with such a good design sense overall — and who thought out his problem in advance, unlike a certain Emerald Gladiator we won't name — unless you read the previous question, that is. ✦

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13 VF 3.00
14 VF/NM 10.00
17 F+ 4.00
18 VF/NM 8.00
19 VF/NM 8.00
20 VF 6.00
21 NM 7.00
27 VF 6.00

DELL GIANTS
BUGS BUNNY'S CHRISTMAS FUNNIES
7 VG- 12 00

BUGS BUNNY'S VACATION FUNNIES
9 FR+ 5.00

HUEY, DEWEY & LOUIE-BACK TO SCHOOL
1 G- 6.00
49 VG 15.00

MICKEY MOUSE FANTASYLAND
1 F- 28.00

MOSES AND THE TEN COMMANDMENTS
VG 8.00

DELL/GOLD KEY MOVIE CLASSICS
20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA
614 (FC) FR/G .6.00

ALICE IN WOND.
331 (FC) G/VG 20.00

AROUND THE WORLD UNDER THE SEA
VG+ 6.00

BEN HUR
1052 VG+ 24.00

BIG RED
(10026-211) VG/F 8.00

BRAVE ONE
G/VG 7.00

BUCKSKIN
1011 F+ 30.00

CAPT. SINDBAD
10077-309 VG+ 12.00

CONQUEROR
VG 30.00

DIRTY DOZEN
12-180-710 VG+ 9.00

DUMBO (1ST)
668 (FC) G .10.00

DUMBO (2ND)
668 (FC) FR .3.00

FBI STORY
1069 G 10.00

FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE
G .6.00

GRAY GHOST
911 (FC) G/VG 14.00

KIDNAPPED
1101 F+ 25.00

KIDNAPPED
10080-306 VG/F 8.00

MAN WITH X-RAY EYES
VG 15.00

MOON PILOT
VG/F 15.00

MYSTERIOUS ISLAND
1213 G 8.00

NIKKI, WILD DOG OF NORTH
VF 15.00

NORTH TO ALASKA
G+ 20.00

OLD IRONSIDES
874 (FC) FR 4.00

OLD YELLER
FC 869 VG 10.00

RIO CONCHOS
10143-503 VG 7.00

SNOW WHITE
10091-310 VG 6.00

SON OF FLUBBER
VF 20.00

SWAMP FOX
1179 (FC) VG/F 22.00

SWORD IN STONE
VG 10.00

THE TEXAN
1027 (FC) VG .18.00

TOBY TYLER
10142-502 VG .5.00

TROUBLE-SHOOTERS
1108 (FC) G .5.00

WHITE STALLIONS
VG .6.00

DEMON
1 VG .8.00
2 NM- .18.00
5 VG 4.00
7 VG 4.00
8 VF 9.00
15 VG 3.00
16 VF 9.00

DEMON ANNUAL
2 NM .20.00

DEN
2 VF/NM .5.00

DENNIS THE MENACE (GIANTS)
14 VG 6.00
44 VG 4.00

DENNIS THE MENACE (MARVEL)
1 NM 10.00
3 NM 6.00

DENNIS THE MENACE AND HIS FRIENDS
22 VF 6.00

DESTROYER DUCK
1 VF 6.00

DETECTIVE
328 VG 20.00
342 VG/F 10.00
351 FR+ 3.00
351 VG 8.00
353 VG+ 12.00
354 VG+ 10.00
355 VG 10.00
356 VG 10.00
360 VG 10.00
361 G 5.00
362 G 4.00
364 VG 10.00
379 VG 8.00
381 VG+ 7.00
369 VG/F 9.00
408 VG+ 8.00
427 VF 12.00
428 F/VF 10.00
432 F/VF 10.00
434 VF/NM 18.00
436 VF 13.00
446 VF- 32.00
446 F/VF 8.00
447 VF/NM 13.00
451 F- 5.00
452 VF 10.00
456 VF/NM 12.00
460 VF/NM 13.00
461 VF/NM 12.00
473 VG 6.00
476 VG 7.00
477 VG+ 8.00
481 VG 4.00
481 VF 12.00
483 VF/NM 12.00
488 NM- 12.00
492 F/VF 5.00
494 NM- 12.00
495 VF+ 8.00
496 VF/NM 7.00
497 VF 6.00
498 VF 6.00
499 NM 6.00
500 NM 15.00
501-600 NM 5.00
601-700 NM 4.00
352 G 5.00

DEVIL DINOSAUR
2 NM- 8.00
4 VF/NM 7.00

DOC SAVAGE (MARVEL)
1 VF/NM .12.00

DONALD DUCK
42 G- 4.00
42 VG 10.00
51 F+ 20.00
56 VG 8.00
57 VG 8.00
61 VG 6.00
64 VG 7.00
86 G/VG 5.00
115 F+ 12.00
142 F/VF 9.00
155 VG/F 4.00
212 NM 10.00
236 NM 14.00
246 NM- 20.00
247 VF 10.00
248 VF/NM 12.00
280 NM 8.00

DONALD DUCK (FOUR COLOR)
339 VG 15.00
367 FR+ 15.00

DONALD DUCK ALBUM
01-204-207 G/VG 5.00

DOOM PATROL
108 F/VF 24.00
113 VG 8.00

DR. STRANGE (60'S)
170 F+ 15.00
171 VF 30.00
173 VF/NM 38.00
175 VF/NM 38.00
176 VF 29.00
178 VF/NM 38.00
180 F+ 15.00

DR. STRANGE (70'S)
2 VF 15.00
3 NM- 15.00
4 VF/NM 12.00
5 VF/NM 12.00
6 NM 9.00
7 NM 9.00
8 VF 6.00

DRIFT MARLO
01-232-207 VG+ 6.00

DUCK ALBUM
353 G- 8.00
450 G 6.00
560 G/VG 7.00
726 VG 10.00
840 VG 10.00
840 F/VF 30.00

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1 G/VG 12.00

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5 NM 18.00
7 VF/NM 10.00

EERIE (WARREN)
82 NM 28.00
100 NM 18.00
126 NM 15.00
134 VF+ 12.00
EIGHTY PAGE GIANT
6 VG 24.00
10 PR 5.00
11 VG+ 30.00
11 FR 8.00
13 VG 28.00
15 VG- 24.00

ELMER FUDD (DELL)
558 (FC) VG 7.00

ELVIRA, MISTRESS OF DARK MOVIE
1 NM 5.00

EPIC ILLUSTRATED
8 NM 8.00
12 VF/NM 6.00
14 F/VF 4.00
32 NM 15.00
32 F+ 5.00
33 F+ 5.00

ETERNALS
1 NM 18.00
2 THRU 14 NM 9.00

EVERYTHING'S DUCKY
1251 (FC) F- 10.00

EVIL ERNIE (ETERNITY)
5 NM 35.00

EVIL ERNIE (LIMITED EDITION)
6/92-1 NM 50.00

EVIL ERNIE RESURRECTION
1 NM 15.00
2 NM 12.00

EWOKS
4 VF/NM 10.00

FAMOUS FIRST EDITION
4 VG .6.00
4 VF 25.00
6 VF/NM 34.00
30 VF 25.00
61 VF/NM 25.00
61 NM- 30.00

FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND
34 VG 20.00

FAMOUS MON-STERS OF FILM-LAND YEARBOOK
1965 VG 15.00

FAMOUS MONSTERS STAR WARS SPECTACULAR
F/VF .8.00

FANTASTIC FOUR
34 VG 20.00
35 G/VG 18.00
46 G/VG 12.00
47 G/VG 12.00
52 F/VF 25.00
55 VG/F 24.00
59 VG 15.00
60 VG 15.00
74 VG 10.00
75 F+ 10.00
77 F+ 15.00
78 VG 8.00
79 VG 8.00
80 VG 8.00
82 F+ 15.00
86 F+ 15.00
131 VG+ 5.00
132 F+ 8.00
134 VG+ 4.00
136 VG 4.00
139 VF 11.00
145 F/VF 8.00
146 VG 8.00
150 F+ 8.00
151 F+ 5.00
154 VG 3.00
156 VG 4.00
161 VF 5.00
165 F+ 5.00
177 VF/NM 6.00
179 VF 5.00
181 VF/NM 6.00
182 NM- 6.00
201-300 NM 6.00
301-400 NM 5.00

FANTASTIC FOUR ANNUAL
5 VG 20.00
7 VG 6.00
11 NM- 8.00
11 VF/NM 7.00
12 NM 8.00
13 NM 9.00

FANTASY MASTERPIECES (1966)
6 VG .6.00
7 VG- 6.00

FATHOM/ TOP COW
0 NM .12.00

FAUST (NORTHSTAR)
1 NM 40.00
1 VF .30.00
3 NM 8.00
4 NM 7.00

FAUST (REBEL)
1 NM .20.00
3 NM 12.00
7 NM 5.00
8 NM 5.00

FEAR
6 G/VG .3.00
8 VG 3.00
13 NM- 10.00
15 VF 9.00
18 VF 7.00
19 F+ 12.00
20 VG 5.00
21 VF/NM 8.00
22 NM 12.00
23 VF+ 8.00
26 NM- 8.00

FIGHTIN' 5
44 NM .6.00

FIGHTIN' AIR FORCE
36 VG 4.00

FIGHTIN' ARMY
44 VG 5.00

FIRESTORM
2 NM 6.00
3 NM 6.00
4 NM 6.00
5 NM 9.00

FIRST GRAPHIC NOVEL
1 NM 8.00

FIRST ISSUE SPECIAL
1 NM 9.00
2 VF/NM 6.00
3 VF- 4.00
5 NM- 8.00
7 NM- 7.00
8 NM 22.00
9 VF 5.00
12 VF/NM 6.00
13 NM- .18.00

FLAMING CARROT
7 NM 9.00
23 NM 5.00

FLASH
163 F+ 26.00
165 VG 16.00
172 VG/F 15.00
173 VG 12.00
179 VG+ 15.00
200 G 4.00
212 VG 5.00
215 VG+ 7.00
216 VF/NM 22.00
221 VG/F 5.00
224 F/VF 8.00
226 VF- 12.00
226 F+ 8.00
228 F/VF 8.00
229 VF/NM 30.00
233 VF 11.00
234 VF/NM 8.00
235 VG 3.00
236 VF/NM 8.00
237 NM 12.00
239 F/VF 9.00
239 NM 12.00
240 VF/NM 8.00
241 VF/NM 10.00
242 VF 6.00
243 VF 6.00
244 VF/NM 8.00
245 NM 10.00
246 NM- 12.00
247 VF 6.00
248 NM 10.00
249-272 NM .7.00

FLASH ANNIVER-SARY SPECIAL
1 NM 14.00

FLINTSTONES (CHARLTON)
8 G/VG 8.00
27 F 5.00
38 VF 10.00

(DELL/GOLD KEY)
56 VG 8.00

(MARVEL)
1 F+ 5.00
2 F+ 8.00

BARNEY & BETTY RUBBLE
1 F 3.00

FLY MAN
39 VG/F 7.00

FOREVER PEOPLE
1 G+ 10.00
1 VG 12.00
8 VF/NM 24.00
9 VF 23.00
11 VF/NM 10.00

FOUR STAR BATTLE TALES
5 VG 4.00

FOUR STAR SPECTACULAR
1 VF/NM 8.00
2 NM 8.00
2 VF/NM 7.00
4 NM- 6.00
4 F/VF 5.00
5 NM 8.00
6 F 3.00

FRANCIS
991 (FC) F+ 12.00

FRANK FRAZETTA FANTASY ILLUSTRATED
5 NM .6.00

FRANKENSTEIN (MARVEL)
4 F/VF 9.00
7 VG 4.00
8 F/VF 14.00
12 VF 6.00

FREEDOM FIGHTERS
1 VF/NM 9.00
1 NM 16.00
6 NM 9.00
9 NM 9.00
10 NM 10.00
12 VF/NM 7.00

FROM BEYOND THE UNKNOWN
3 G 3.00
10 G 4.00

FROM HELL
2 NM .6.00

FRONTIER DOCTOR
877 (FC) F- 25.00
20 VG 5.00
21 VF/NM 8.00
22 NM 12.00
23 VF+ 8.00
26 NM- 8.00

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10 VG+ 5.00
11 VG 4.00

FURY (DELL)
1080 (FC) VF 40.00

G.I. COMBAT
108 VG 20.00
148 VG 6.00
226 F- 3.00
228 VF 4.00
229 VF/NM 5.00
230 VF 5.00
233 VF/NM 5.00
244 F- 3.00
269 NM 5.00
271 VF 3.00
276 NM 5.00

GALACTIC WARS COMIX (WARREN)
NN VF 8.00

GARRISON'S GORILLAS
1 F+ 15.00

GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE
2 VG+ 30.00

GHOST IN THE SHELL
5 NM 10.00

GHOST MANOR
36 NM- .10.00

GHOST RIDER (1973)
4 F+ 7.00
5 VG 5.00
7 NM- 15.00
8 VF+ 12.00

GHOST STORIES (DELL)
2 F- 7.00
3 G- 3.00
5 VG+ 5.00
6 VG 6.00
11 VG/F 3.00
14 VG 4.00
16 VG 4.00
28 VG 3.00

GHOSTLY HAUNTS
35 VF 8.00

GHOSTS
7 G/VG 4.00

GIANT SIZE
CONAN
5 VF/NM 12.00

DEFENDERS
1 VF 10.00

DEFENDERS
1 VF/NM 20.00
3 F+ 6.00

DRACULA
2 VF+ 15.00

FANTASTIC FOUR
5 VF .10.00

HULK
1 VG .6.00

MAN-THING
2 VG .4.00
4 VG .4.00
5 F/VF 10.00

MASTER OF KUNG FU
2 VF/NM .12.00
3 VG 4.00

POWER MAN
1 VG/F 4.00
1 F+ 7.00

GLADSTONE COMIC LIBRARY
4 NM 10.00

GODZILLA
1 NM 20.00
3 NM 10.00
5 F+ 4.00
7 F- 3.00
16 VG 3.00
19 NM 7.00
20 F+ 4.00
22 F+ 4.00

GOLD KEY SPOTLIGHT
6 F/VF 4.00

GOOFY
1053 F+ 18.00
1053 VG 10.00
1149 F 12.00

GORGO
21 F/VF 20.00
23 VG 6.00

GOVERNOR & J.J.
2 VG+ 6.00

GREEN LANTERN
32 VG 22.00
38 VG/F 26.00
44 VG+ 16.00
79 F+ 18.00
81 F/VF 28.00
82 VG/F 12.00
90 VG 3.00
120-200 NM 4.00

GREEN LANTERN (2ND SERIES)
1 THRU 45 NM 4.00

GREEN LANTERN/ GREEN ARROW
1 NM 6.00
7 NM 5.00

GUNHAWKS
1 VF- 12.00

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3 VG .5.00

HARBINGER
0 NM .5.00

HARD BOILED
1 NM .7.00

HARDY BOYS (GOLD KEY)
3 F- .8.00

HATE (1ST PRINTING)
2 F 5.00
3 NM 10.00
5 VF 6.00
11 NM 6.00
16 NM 5.00
17 NM 5.00

HAUNTED
66 F 3.00

HAWKMAN
6 VG 20.00
7 VG+ 18.00
9 VG 15.00
10 VG+ 18.00
11 VG 15.00
13 VG 15.00
18 VG 10.00
24 VG 10.00

HARD-COVERS
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May-77 VF/NM 15.00
Jul-77 VF 10.00
Oct-77 NM- 10.00
Nov-77 VF 6.00
Dec-77 NM 10.00
Apr-78 F 4.00
May-78 VG 3.00
May-78 NM 8.00
Jul-78 VF 4.00
Dec-79 VF 4.00
Feb-83 NM- 4.00
Aug-83 VF/NM 4.00
Sep-83 VF/NM 4.00
Nov-83 VF/NM 4.00
Sep-84 NM 6.00
Nov-97 VF 4.00

HELLBLAZER
1 VF/NM 10.00
4 NM 9.00
5 NM 9.00
6 NM 5.00

HELLRAISER
1 NM 10.00

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1 F+ 5.00
3 NM .8.00
4 NM .8.00
5 NM .8.00
6 NM .8.00
7 NM .8.00

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NM 5.00

HEROES, INC. (DITKO/WOOD)
1 NM 15.00

HIGH ADVENTURE (TV)
949 (FC) G .5.00

HITMAN
1 NM .9.00

HOT ROD CARTOONS
32 VG 4.00
36 F

COMICS & FUN

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Van Nuys, CA 91411
Call to reserve between 12:00-7:00 p.m.
818/779-7643

8 VG+ 7.00
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2 VF 10.00
OMAC
1 NM 18.00
2 VF 6.00
8 VF/NM 7.00
OMAHA THE CAT DANCER
1 NM 8.00
5 NM 5.00
OMEGA THE UNKNOWN
1 NM 10.00
3 VF/NM 7.00
5 THRU 8 NM 8.00
ONE HUNDRED AND ONE DALMATIANS
1183 (FC) FR/G 6.00
OPEN SPACE (ALEX ROSS)
0 NM 5.00
OSWALD THE RABBIT
183(FC) VG/F 22.00
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162 VG 12.00
163 F 18.00
207 G- 3.00
257 VG 4.00
258 F/VF 7.00
265 VF- 9.00
274 F+ 6.00
278 VG 4.00
280 G- 3.00
286 F+ 5.00
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79 VG 6.00
80 F- 8.00
84 F+ 10.00
86 VG 5.00
142 VF 9.00
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1 F- 10.00
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1 NM 6.00
OUTLAW KID
2 VG 4.00
PEBBLES & BAMM BAMM
19 VG 4.00
PENTHOUSE MEN'S ADVENTURE COMIX
1 VF/NM 6.00
PHANTOM STRANGER
23 F+ 12.00
27 VF/NM 12.00
30 F+ 8.00
32 VF/NM 10.00
32 VF 9.00
34 F+ 5.00
37 VF 8.00
41 VF/NM 12.00
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7 VF/NM 10.00
PLASTIC FORKS
1 NM 6.00
PLOP
1 F+ 12.00
5 VF 12.00
11 VF 19.00
15 F- 5.00
PLOP!
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POISON ELVES (MULEHIDE)
15 NM 25.00
18 NM 12.00
19 NM 12.00
POPEYE
94 VF 15.00
PORKY PIG (DELL)
26 G/VG 5.00
30 F+ 12.00
33 VG 5.00
50 VG- 4.00
52 VG 3.00
54 VG 3.00
PORKY PIG (FOUR COLOR)
295 G- 8.00
303 G 7.00
311 G+ 6.00
370 VG/F 10.00
410 G 4.00
POWER MAN
16 VF/NM 5.00
16 NM 10.00
20 VF/NM 5.00
57 F+ 8.00
66 VF/NM 16.00
78 NM 12.00
78 VF 9.00
84 VF/NM 10.00
POWER MAN ANNUAL
1 NM- 10.00
POWERS
1 NM 10.00
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6 NM 8.00
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RANMA 1/2
4 VF 5.00
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2 NM 5.00
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57 VG 10.00
RAZOR
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RAZOR 1/2
NM 8.00
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1 NM 35.00
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8 VF 6.00
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1 VF 6.00
5 NM 6.00
7 NM 6.00
8 NM 6.00
RED STAR
1 NM 10.00
3 NM 5.00
REID FLEMING
2 NM 5.00
3 NM 5.00
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934 (FC) F+ 40.00
934 (FC) VG 24.00
RESURRECTION MAN
1 NM 9.00
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3 VF/NM 7.00
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26 VF/NM 35.00
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RISING STARS
1 NM 10.00
RISING STARS PREVIEW
NM 10.00
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14 VG 8.00
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5 G- 9.00
ROCKY LANE
73 G 10.00
ROMAN HOLIDAYS
3 VG 6.00
RONIN
1 NM 6.00
2 NM 6.00
3 NM 6.00
4 NM 6.00
6 VF 10.00
RUINS
1 NM 8.00
SANDMAN
1 NM 40.00
2 NM 16.00
3 NM 10.00
4 NM 10.00
6 NM 10.00
7 NM 10.00
8 NM 35.00
22 NM 12.00
23-75 NM 4.00
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1 VF/NM 25.00
SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN
14 F 5.00
16 F- 7.00
16 NM 15.00
17 VF/NM 10.00
25 VF+ 8.00
26 VF+ 8.00
30 VF+ 8.00
50 NM 12.00
63 VF/NM 5.00
66 F/VF 4.00
67 VF 4.00
68 VF/NM 5.00
69 VF 4.00
70 F/VF 4.00
71 NM 8.00
72 NM 8.00
75 NM 8.00
78 NM- 6.00
80 NM 7.00
81 F 3.00
85 VF/NM 6.00
91 VF/NM 6.00
92 VF/NM 6.00
93 VF/NM 6.00
100 VF/NM 5.00
101 NM 6.00
103 NM- 6.00
104 VF/NM 5.00
106 VF/NM 5.00
107 VF/NM 5.00
110 NM 6.00
113 VF/NM 5.00
119 F+ 3.00
124 F 3.00
131 NM- 5.00
137 NM 5.00
140 VF 3.00
142 NM- 5.00
143 VF/NM 4.00
145 NM- 5.00
146 NM- 5.00
148 VF+ 4.00
149 VF 3.00
SAVAGE TALES
2 F 10.00
3 VF/NM 25.00
4 VF/NM 12.00
SCAMP (GOLD KEY)
7 VG 4.00
SCARY TALES
37 NM 6.00
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3 VG/F 5.00
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7 F+ 8.00
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27 VG 8.00
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994 (FC) VG 20.00
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3 VG 8.00
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1 VF/NM 13.00
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8 NM 10.00
10 NM 10.00
11 VF 5.00
12 VF 5.00
13 VF 5.00
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8 NM 28.00
SECRETS OF HAUNTED HOUSE
27 VF 6.00
SERGEANT FURY
14 F- 18.00
15 VG 15.00
17 VG/F 14.00
19 VG 10.00
20 VG/F 15.00
21 G/VG 7.00
22 F/VF 20.00
23 VG 8.00
24 VG 10.00
26 F- 10.00
27 VG 8.00
28 VG/F 10.00
29 VG/F 10.00
32 VG 6.00
34 VG 6.00
35 VG 6.00
36 VG 8.00
40 F 8.00
41 F 8.00
42 F- 7.00
43 VG/F 6.00
45 F+ 8.00
46 F+ 8.00
47 F 8.00
48 F+ 8.00
49 VF+ 20.00
51 G 3.00
52 F- 7.00
59 F+ 8.00
60 VG 5.00
62 F 7.00
63 VF 7.00
70 VF- 12.00
74 F+ 8.00
75 VG+ 5.00
77 VG 4.00
78 VG+ 5.00
79 F+ 8.00
80 VG 4.00
81 F- 4.00
83 F 6.00
118 VG/F 3.00
119 VF 7.00
163 VF 5.00
SERGEANT FURY ANNUAL
2 VG 8.00
SERGEANT ROCK
334 F+ 3.00
412 VF/NM 4.00
SERGEANT ROCK ANNUAL
3 NM- 8.00
SEVENTY SEVEN SUNSET STRIP
1106 (FC) VG+ 24.00
SHADE (1970'S)
1 NM- 8.00
4 NM 8.00
6 NM 8.00
7 NM 8.00
SHADOW (1973)
1 NM- 35.00
1 VF 22.00
3 VF/NM 15.00
3 VG/F 3.00
4 VG/F 3.00
5 NM 10.00
10 NM 8.00
11 VF/NM 7.00
12 NM 8.00
SHADOW (ARCHIE)
1 G- 5.00
SHAZAM
2 NM- 6.00
8 VG 7.00
11 VG 3.00
13 VG/F 7.00
14 VG 8.00
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SHE HULK
1 NM 10.00
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SHOWCASE
61 VG+ 33.00
64 VG 25.00
87 6 3.00
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91 VF 15.00
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SILVER SURFER
2 VG+ 45.00
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1 NM 8.00
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1 NM 7.00
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1 NM 8.00
SKULL THE SLAYER
1 NM 10.00
SOLAR (GOLD KEY)
16 F- 7.00
16 F/VF 18.00
SON OF SATAN
1 F+ 8.00
1 VF- 14.00
2 NM 10.00
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4 NM 10.00
6 NM 12.00
7 NM 12.00
SOUPY SALES
1 VG 20.00
SPACE MAN
9 NM- 9.00
SPACE WAR
33 VG 3.00
SPASM (JEFF JONES)
1 VG 5.00
SPAWN
1 NM 15.00
4 NM 15.00
5 NM 10.00
6 NM 12.00
7 NM 12.00
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SPECIAL MARVEL EDITION
1 F+ 12.00
1 VG 6.00
2 VG- 4.00
3 VF 10.00
16 VF/NM 25.00
SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN
1 VF/NM 33.00
3 VF 8.00
11 NM- 8.00
12 F 3.00
13-26 NM 7.00
27 NM 20.00
28 NM 12.00
85 NM 8.00
SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL
1 NM 10.00
SPECTRE
5 VG- 12.00
8 G 5.00
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SPECTRE (1992)
1 NM 6.00
2 NM 6.00
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SPIDER-WOMAN
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0 NM 5.00
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22 NM 10.00
26 NM 10.00
SPOOF
2 VF/NM 10.00
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51 VG 6.00
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13 F 4.00
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31-49 NM 4.00
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59 NM 25.00
60-62 NM 4.00
63 NM 10.00
64 NM 50.00
65-78 NM 4.00
79 NM 15.00
80-85 NM 4.00
86 NM 40.00
87 NM 4.00
89 NM 4.00
90 NM 60.00
91-110 NM 4.00
112 VG 8.00
113 NM 15.00
114 NM 50.00
115 NM 15.00
117 NM 4.00
119 NM 4.00
121 NM 4.00
122 NM 35.00
127 NM 20.00
128 NM 20.00
129 NM 25.00
132-141 NM 4.00
143 NM 20.00
145 NM 4.00
148 NM 4.00
151 NM 15.00
155 NM 4.00
156 NM 4.00
157 NM 4.00
158 NM 4.00
159 NM 4.00
162 NM 4.00
172 NM 4.00
175 NM 4.00
176 NM 4.00
184 NM 4.00
190 NM 4.00
191 NM 4.00
196 NM 4.00
198 NM 4.00
209 NM 4.00
217 NM 4.00
218 NM 4.00
219 NM 4.00
224 NM 4.00
226 NM 4.00
227 NM 4.00
252 NM 4.00
255 NM 4.00
265 NM 4.00
267 NM 4.00
269 NM 4.00
270 NM 4.00
274 NM 4.00
277 NM 4.00
281 NM 4.00
284 NM 4.00
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4 NM 10.00
9 NM 4.00
11 VF 6.00
14 VF+ 8.00
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155 F/VF 22.00
157 F- 9.00
159 VF 22.00
160 F+ 12.00
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163 F- 10.00
164 VF/NM 18.00
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179 NM 14.00
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131 F- 6.00
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146 VF 14.00
148 VF 14.00
150 VG 4.00
151 F/VF 12.00
151 VG 5.00
152 F/VF 15.00
156 G/VG 4.00
156 VF 22.00
157 VG 6.00
158 VG 4.00
163 VG 5.00
164 VF 12.00
167 VF+ 12.00
168 F+ 7.00
169 VG 4.00
171 VG 4.00
173 F+ 6.00
176 VF+ 12.00
176 F/VF 10.00
177 F+ 6.00
178 VG 4.00
179 VG+ 5.00
180 VG/F 5.00
182 VG 4.00
182 VG/F 5.00
183 VG/F 5.00
183 F/VF 10.00
184 VF/NM 10.00
189 F+ 4.00
191 VG 4.00
192 F/VF 6.00
194 VF+ 6.00
194 NM- 10.00
197 VG/F 6.00
197 F+ 12.00
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199 VF 10.00
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201 F 5.00
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218 VF 8.00
218 NM- 10.00
219 VF 8.00
219 VF/NM 8.00
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223 VF 6.00
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227 F+ 4.00
228 F+ 4.00
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233 NM 15.00
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4 VG 4.00
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6 VF 13.00
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157 VG 16.00
159 G+ 14.00
161 G/VG 14.00
164 VG 14.00
171 G/VG 10.00
174 VG 10.00
175 VG 14.00
179 VG+ 15.00
179 G/VG 10.00
180 F- 16.00
181 VG 10.00
182 VG 10.00
184 G 6.00
185 F+ 22.00
188 VG+ 10.00
188 G/VG 7.00
188 F+ 22.00
189 VG 10.00
190 VG 10.00
191 VG 10.00
192 VG 10.00
197 VG/F 16.00
200 VG/F 12.00
201 VG/F 10.00
201 F+ 15.00
203 FR 3.00
204 VG 8.00
206 VG 8.00
208 VG/F 9.00
209 VG 8.00
210 F+ 15.00
210 VF- 26.00
211 VG/F 10.00
216 F+ 15.00
220 VF/NM 28.00
223 VF/NM 28.00
224 VF 23.00
225 VF/NM 28.00
226 VF 18.00
228 F/VF 15.00
229 F+ 15.00
230 VF 16.00
235 VF/NM 25.00
238 F- 7.00
241 VG/F 6.00
241 F/VF 12.00
244 VG/F 6.00
244 F/VF 10.00
245 FR 4.00
246 VF/NM 16.00
247 VF/NM 16.00
253 F/VF 12.00
256 G/VG 3.00
256 VF 9.00
257 VF 9.00
258 NM- 15.00
260 NM- 15.00
262 VF 9.00
263 VF 9.00
264 F 3.00
264 VF/NM 10.00
265 F 3.00
266 VF/NM 10.00
269 VF/NM 10.00
270 VF/NM 10.00
271 NM 12.00
271 VF/NM 10.00
273 NM 15.00
274 VF/NM 10.00
275 VF/NM 8.00
276 VF/NM 8.00
276 F+ 7.00
277 VF+ 7.00
279 VF/NM 10.00
280 NM- 12.00
282 VG 3.00
283 VF 9.00
285 F+ 4.00
288 VF/NM 6.00
289 NM 10.00
291 F+ 4.00
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299 NM 10.00
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170 NM- 18.00
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172 VG/F 6.00
173 VG 5.00
174 F+ 8.00
175 G/VG 3.00
176 VG 5.00
176 F+ 8.00
177 VG/F 5.00
178 VG 3.00
183 F 4.00
185 VG 3.00
191 VF 6.00
192 VG 3.00
199 VF/NM 7.00
201 VF 4.00
202 F+ 3.00
206 VF 5.00
208 VF 4.00
209 VF 4.00
210 VF 4.00
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18 VG 3.00
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69 VG 10.00
71 VG+ 10.00
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68 VG 15.00
69 VG 15.00
69 F/VF 35.00
72 VG 10.00
73 VG/F 12.00
73 VG+ 12.00
75 VG 8.00
76 VG/F 12.00
76 VG+ 12.00
79 VG 10.00
83 F 12.00
84 F+ 18.00
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88 F+ 18.00
88 VG 10.00
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207 VF/NM 35.00
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212 NM 16.00
213 VF 10.00
214 VF 10.00
215 VF 10.00
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226 NM 14.00
228 NM 14.00
229 NM 14.00
231 VF/NM 20.00
232 VF 16.00
233 VF 16.00
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161 VG 5.00
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170 F/VF 14.00
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177 F+ 10.00
179 F+ 10.00
185 VG 4.00
191 VG 4.00
206 VG 3.00
211 VF/NM 7.00
212 VF/NM 7.00
213 NM 10.00
215 VF/NM 7.00
218 NM 8.00
219 NM- 8.00
250 NM 8.00
255 NM 5.00
261 NM 5.00
264 NM 5.00
268 NM 5.00
269 NM 5.00
273 NM 5.00
275 NM 5.00
276 NM 5.00
278 NM 5.00
279 NM 5.00
280 NM 5.00
281 NM 5.00
284 NM 5.00
285 NM 5.00
286 NM 5.00
287 NM 5.00
292 NM 5.00
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Comic strips before The Yellow Kid

The drawings were "talking" long before there were words on a nightshirt

By **Doug Wheeler**

Several years back, I scripted a few comics (and will likely do so again in the future) — *Classics Desecrated*, the Eisner-nominated *Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*, a two-year run on *Swamp Thing*, the second-volume run of *Primortals*, *Comico Christmas Special*, and various science-fiction short stories.

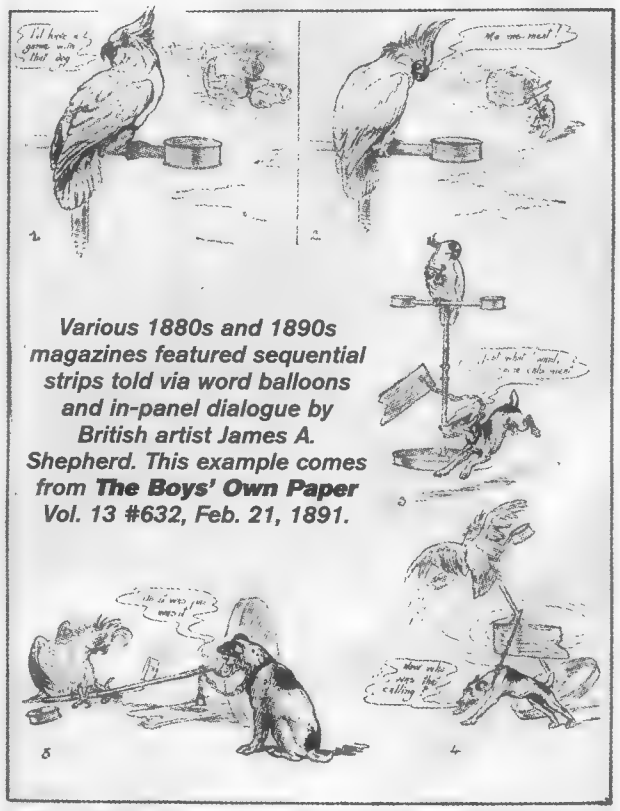
More recently, I was the lead writer and creator of the Victorian Age Comics section that was introduced last spring in the 2002 edition of the annual *Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide* (pages 260 through 280), co-written and created with Robert L. Beerbohm and edited by Richard D. Olson, PhD. This section, which detailed the existence of hundreds of comic books published in America during the 19th century, has been further expanded for the upcoming 2003 edition.

My involvement in the Victorian Age listings and essay in *Overstreet* came about because of the research I have been doing on 19th century comics — bringing me to the purpose of this preview in ***CBG***. For the past seven to eight years, one of my projects has been gathering evidence that the long-held claim that the first publication of a multi-panel, sequential comic strip told entirely via word balloons or in-panel dialogue was *The Yellow Kid and His New Phonograph* by Richard Felton Outcault on October 25, 1896, is *wrong*.

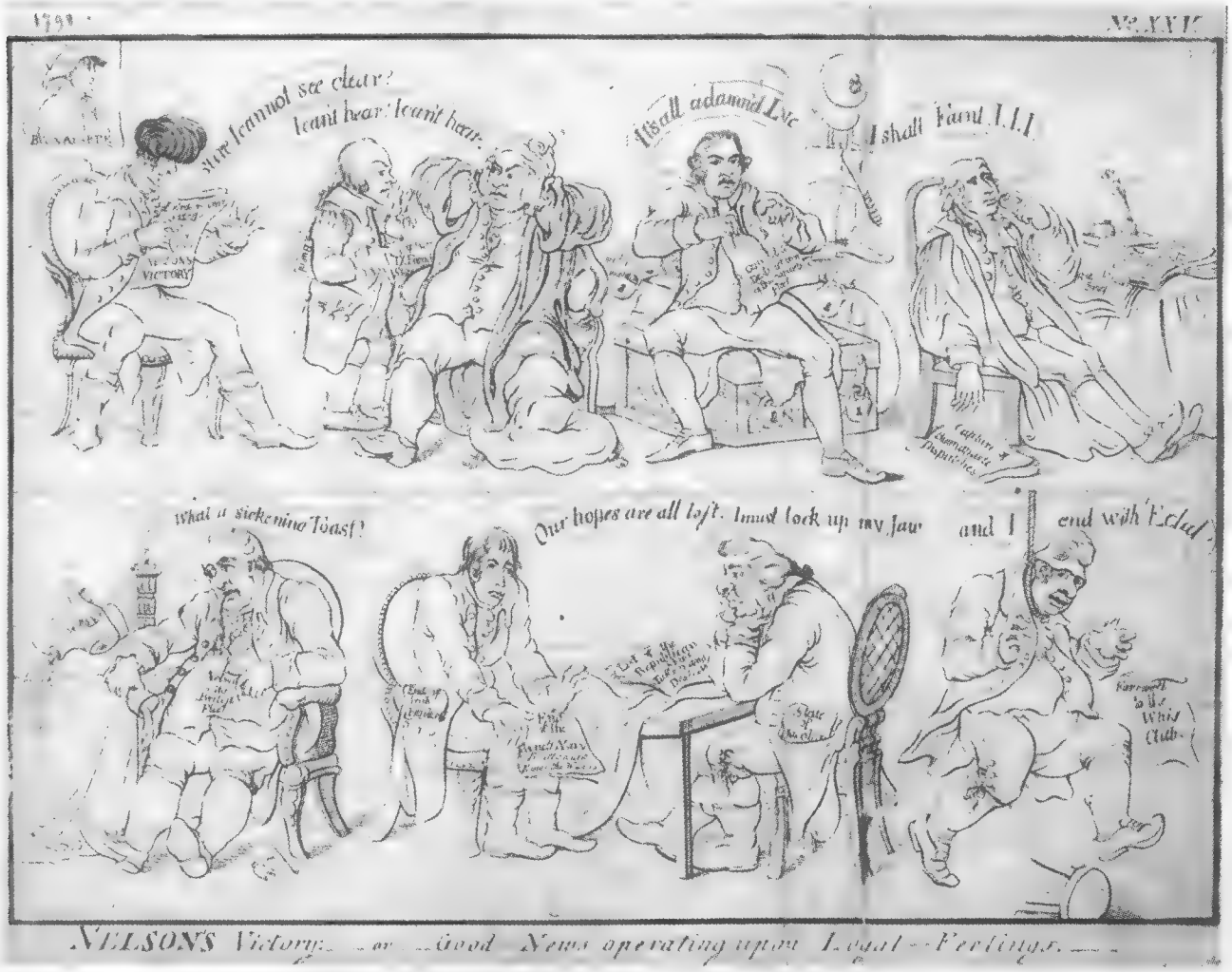
That claim has been the basis of statements that "comics" began with that strip, a notion which various comics histories for the past 60+ years have repeatedly drilled into our heads. The United States Postal System even issued a series of commemorative stamps in celebration of the 100th anniversary of this supposed milestone.

Our history books, however, are flawed. I have gathered dozens upon dozens of comic strips — ranging from the late 1700s to the early pre-*Yellow Kid* 1890s — which all accomplish the same feat, and all appeared prior to *Yellow Kid*.

I've waited to release this information as I continued to gather more examples, because I knew that, had I published with the very first such strip I had discovered, the protectors of the *Yellow Kid* myth would simply have dismissed it as an isolated case that had had no influence on later developments of the comics form.



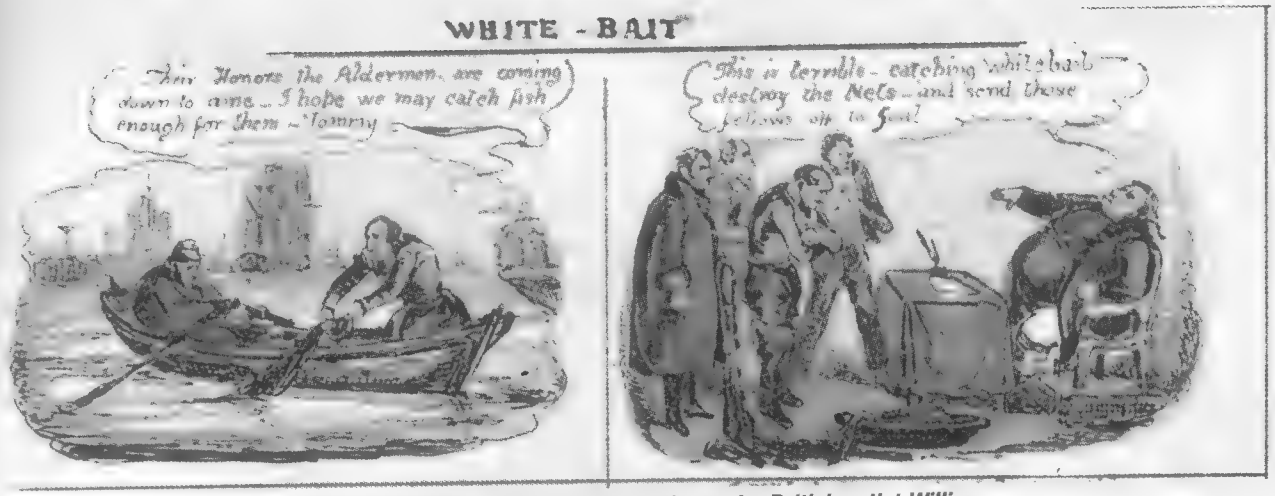
Various 1880s and 1890s magazines featured sequential strips told via word balloons and in-panel dialogue by British artist James A. Shepherd. This example comes from* The Boys' Own Paper *Vol. 13 #632, Feb. 21, 1891.


Now I cannot see clear?
I can't hear! I can't hear.
It's all adamoid I've
I shall Faint. I. I. I
What a sickening Toast!
Our hopes are all lost. I must lock up my Jaw and I end with Eclat!
NELSONS Victory... or ...Good News operating upon Loyal Feelings.

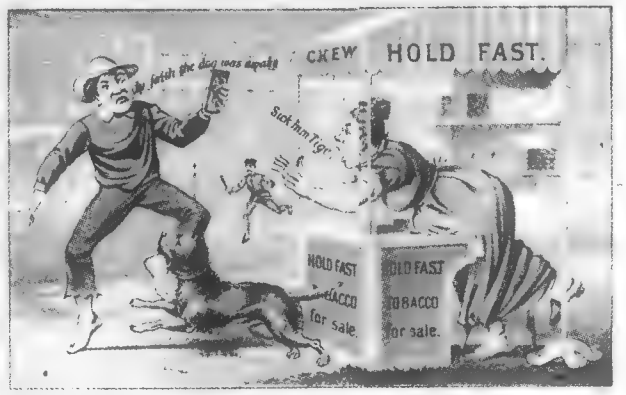
A 1798 sequence by British cartoonist James Gillray followed the despair of a Napoleon sympathizer at news of his defeats.

Get out, you Crank asking Silly and impertinent questions
Do you know who that was? It was one of our Party friends
You are Not a Crank; your Questions were all right, but I misunderstood You, Etc. Etc.

Canadian cartoonists were also producing sequential word-balloon strips prior to Outcault's* Yellow Kid*. This example is from the Canadian humor magazine* Grip *Vol. 31 #3, Jan. 21, 1881.


WHITE - BAIT
Their Honors the Aldermen are coming down to dine - I hope we may catch fish enough for them - Tommy
This is terrible - catching white-bait destroy the Nets - and send those fellows off to Sea!

Sequential panels with in-panel dialogue by British artist William Heath appeared in ***The Looking Glass*** *Vol. 1 #7, July 1, 1830.*



This Hold Fast advertising strip from the 1880s was redrawn from an 1870s version. "Tige" was later reused as the name of Buster Brown's dog in R.F Outcault's ***Buster Brown*** *strip.*

Instead, I've waited until I had enough examples to overwhelm such an argument.

Examples shown in this preview represent the first publication of these strips with recognition of what they represent in terms of sequential, word-balloon-driven comic strips, in more than a century. They are only a sample of what I will present later this year in an issue of *Comic Art* magazine.

That said, the number of strips I will present there are, I am certain, merely a fraction of such examples not yet rediscovered.

In that article, I will discuss the high prevalence of word-balloon usage in 19th century cartoons. I'll examine their co-existence with the then-more-dominant form of sequential comics, in which dialogue and narration was placed beneath each panel, rather than within the panels. And I will provide a discussion of how these comics — which many comics scholars have denied as being "comics" and would prefer readers did not even know existed — are, in fact, just as legitimate "comics" as their word-balloon-driven 20th century counterparts.

Also considered will be those who insist that a comic strip can not *be* a "comic strip" without continuing characters — an argument so ludicrous that, if applied to other media, would rule *Saving Private Ryan* as not a movie, Shakespeare's *Macbeth* as not a play, and *Catcher in the Rye* as not a novel, all for the crime of their lacking characters continued in later sequels. (Characters are story elements, the same as plot and dialogue; they are *not* the medium in which that story is told.)

Also discussed will be how non-human devices and animals that "talk" — such as telephones, phonographs, and parrots — resulted in increased word-balloon usage, as comics artists struggled with differentiating the speech of human characters from non-humans in their strips.

Here, in these two pages, I am simply saying enough to introduce the concept, then shut up. The more I write, the less room is left to show the strips.

So, enjoy! *Comic Art* magazine will also provide, in its upcoming third issue, an article co-written by Beerbohm and me on the influence of Swiss comics artist Rodolphe Töpffer in the development of graphic novels in America in the 1840s through 1870s, complete with many pages of reprinted examples. ✦

Those wishing to reach Wheeler may contact him via ***MidgetEyeball@comcast.net****. © 2003 Doug Wheeler.*

Cartoonist John McLenan depicted President-elect Abraham Lincoln sneaking into Washington on the back cover of ***Harper's Weekly*** *Vol. 5 #219 (March 9, 1861).*

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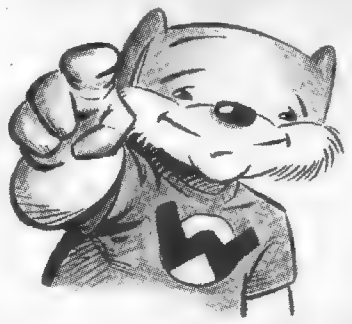

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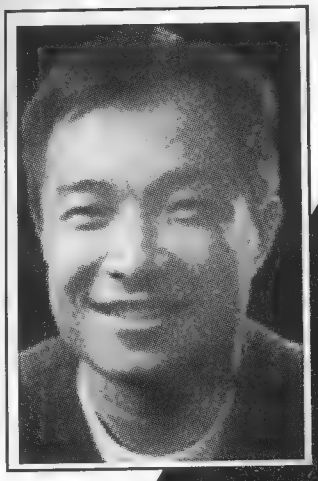

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Mile High Comics has won the bidding on eBay to host an autograph party featuring Wildstorm/Homage founder Jim Lee! This auction was initiated by Jim as a way of his making a personal contribution to the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, an organization that Mile High Comics has also been very active in supporting. As a consequence of winning the auction, Mile High Comics will be making a contribution of $6,700.00 to this tremendously worthy cause.

The exact date of the signing has yet to be determined, but it will probably be toward the end of March of next year about the time when the first trade paperback collection of the wonderful new BATMAN: HUSH storyline by Jim Lee and Jeph Loeb is hopefully going to released. The signing will be held at our fantastic Thornton, Colorado Mega-Store, just five miles north of downtown Denver.

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Contest #1

We are going to do a random drawing from our special e-mail list for the Jim Lee Dinner Party. Whoever wins this drawing, no matter where they live in the world, will be flown (tourist/coach class) to Denver at our expense. The winner will get three nights in a nice Denver hotel (our choice), transportation to and from the signing, and dinner with Jim Lee, Chuck Rozanski, and the winners of the four other contests. If the winner of the contest cannot make the trip to Denver, they have the alternative of selecting $1,000.00 in back issue comics (your choice!) from the Mile High Comics website, or from any Mile High Comics retail location.

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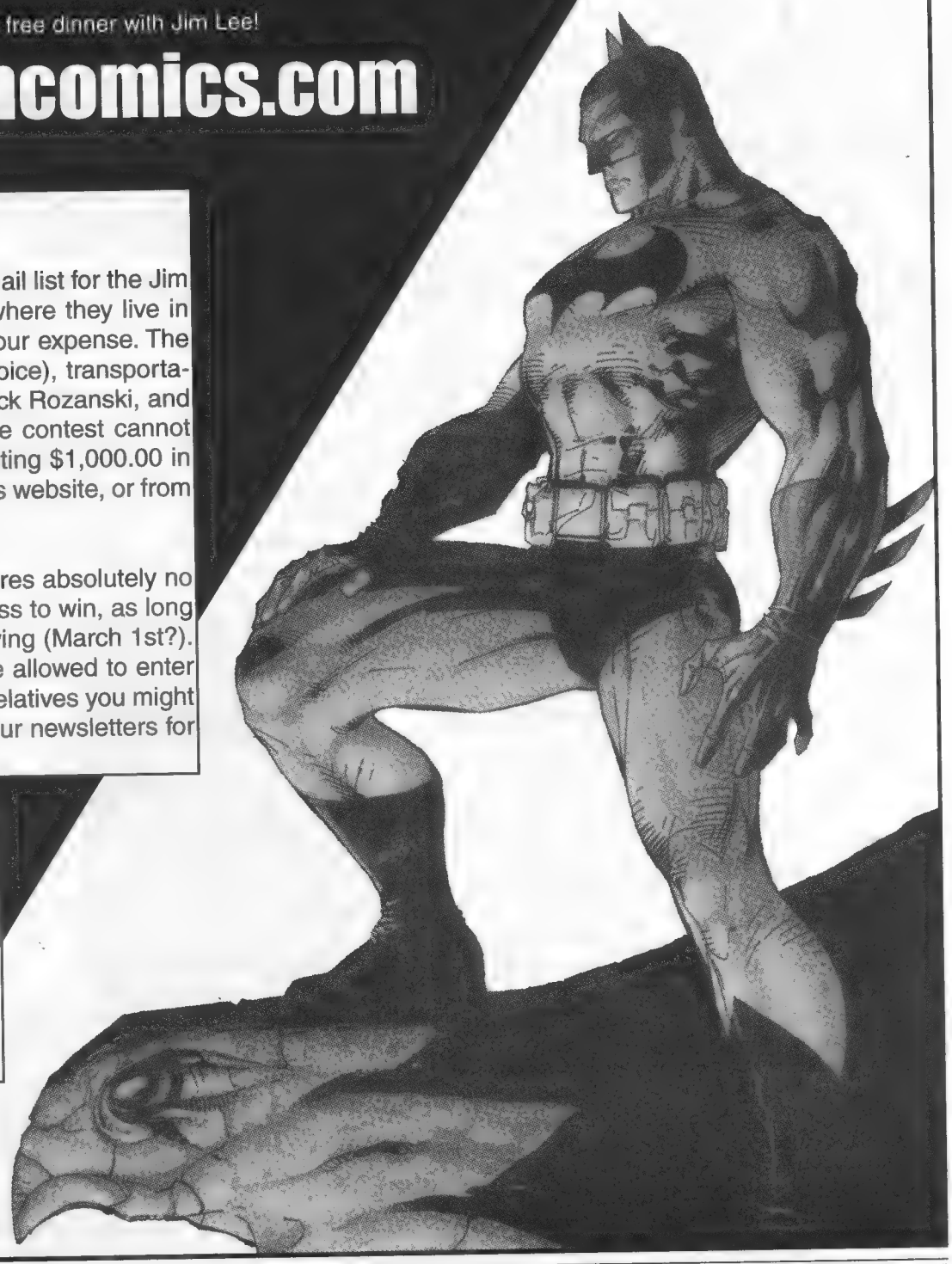

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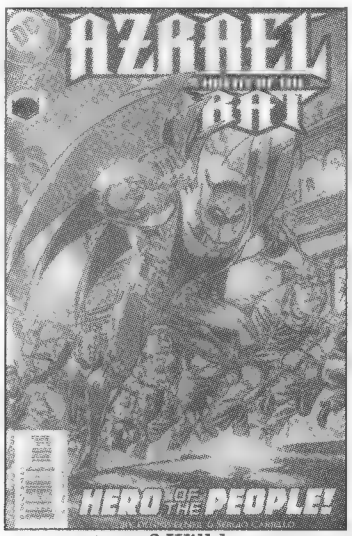
Canceled Comics Cavalcade claims column

Captain provides a post-mortem for several series

The latest solicitations list no fewer than five canceled DC comics for March: *Azrael, Batman: Gotham Adventures, Spectre, Supergirl,* and *Young Justice*. Add *Titans* from February and *Superman: Man of Steel* from January, and it appears a housecleaning is taking place at 1700 Broadway.

However, that impression could well be erroneous, since four of these seven are being re-launched, more or less. Let's take a look alphabetically:



• ***Azrael: Agent of The Bat* #100** is the last, shipping March 12, and wraps up the current storyline, in which Jean-Paul Valley has been suffering from a mysterious malady that makes him both delusional and more powerful than ever — but which Dr. Thompkins believes should have killed him already. Will he die with the end of the series? Will he be cured and get yet another new costume? Will he go crazy and wipe out The Green Lantern Corps? (Oh, wait, that's been done.)

Technically, *Azrael* isn't canceled so much as it is simply ending. According to an April 2002 online interview by Matt Brady with series creator and writer Denny O'Neil, "Mike [Carlin] suggested to me three or four months ago that in lieu of canceling the title, I might want to bring the story to a close — to shape it to an ending," O'Neil said. "For a whole lot of reasons, not the least of which is this way I have control over the fate of my own character, I agreed. It's not like there was a cancellation date set, but the handwriting was pretty clearly on the wall, and the title was not going to persist forever. And these days, 100 issues is a pretty good run."

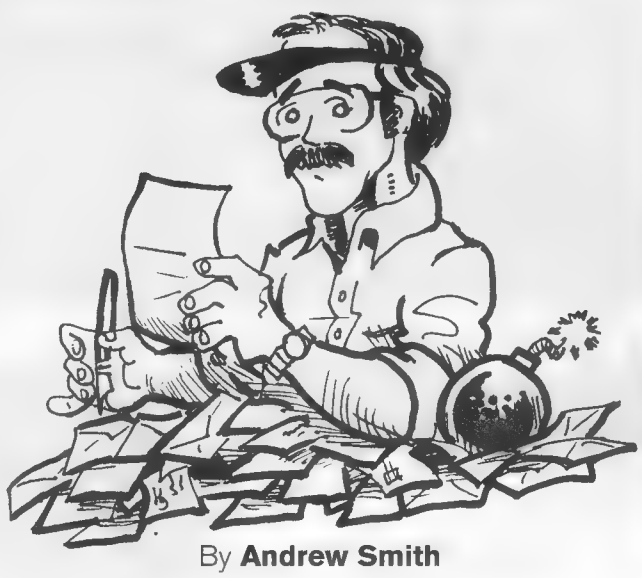
That it is, particularly with the same writer! So kudos to O'Neil for continuing to set the bar for professionalism, even as he retires. I admit to prejudice; I've met O'Neil and admire him both personally and professionally.

Which is why it pains me to say that I never cared much for *Azrael*. I never saw any point to the series.

According to other interviews, O'Neil created the character to right a perceived wrong — he feared the emphasis on amoral, violent "heroes" in the early '90s was a step down a bad path and wanted to show what Batman would be like if he was more like Punisher or Wolverine. To O'Neil's satisfaction, the fans hated Azrael in the Bat-suit and clamored for Batman's return (which was planned, anyway).

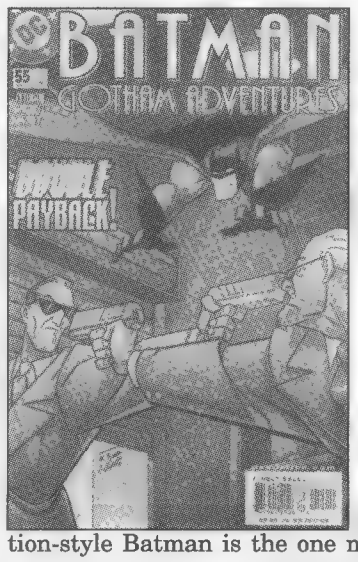
But, to this reader, once Azrael's story purpose was served, I had little desire to see him again. Jean-Paul Valley was (deliberately) a cipher and Azrael was redundant, with the original Caped Crusader back on the job.

Dear Captain ...



By **Andrew Smith**

Still, I enjoy O'Neil's writing so much — he still infuses most secondary characters with more wit and depth than half a dozen other writers put together, and nobody handles the sprawling Bat-cast better — that I slogged through the *Azrael* series. I still want to see more of O'Neil's writing, retirement or no, but I can live without *Azrael*.



• ***Batman: Gotham Adventures*** ends with #60, shipping March 26. Not to worry, though — it's being replaced that same month with *Batman Adventures* #1, with writing by Dan Slott and Ty Templeton and art by Rick Burchett, Terry Beatty, and Templeton.

I read an interview with Slott somewhere that I can't lay my hands on where he explained that the animation-style Batman is the one most non-readers are familiar with, and how important it is to keep that version of the character available on the stands. And it's hoped the relaunch will give it greater exposure.

I couldn't agree more. On any given month, *Gotham Adventures* (or its predecessors) was the best Bat-title out there. Anything that keeps it high-profile is a good move in my book. And I admit to being a Ty Templeton fan going back to *Stig's Inferno*, which probably proves that I'm way too old to be reading funnybooks ...

• ***Spectre* #27** wraps up The Ghostly Guardian's latest series, shipping March 5. I haven't much to say about this version, since my fond memories of the John Ostrander-Tom Mandrake effort are still so overpowering that any other *Spectre* series must, eh, pale in comparison.

But it must be noted that the Ostrander direction also got canceled, so the decision to alter The Spectre from The Spirit of Vengeance to The Spirit of Redemption didn't surprise me. Nor did the use of Hal Jordan in the green cloak come as an enormous shock; clearly, the outraged reaction by fandom to the savaging of Jordan's character required some back-pedaling by DC, and he was already conveniently dead, so there you go. And J.M. DeMatteis was probably a good choice as writer, as his often mystical, sometimes New Age gobbledygook makes a reasonable match with a character whose very existence is conceptual.

All that being said, I was only lukewarm to this *Spectre*, and it doesn't pain me to see it end. To quote Tony Isabella, your mileage may vary.

• ***Supergirl*** goes the way of *All-Flash* with #80, shipping March 19. Writer Peter David explained in great depth how this fate came about in ***CBG*** #1522, so I've nothing to say on that score.

I will answer David in a sense, because I fell into none of the negative categories that he lamented — and this evident bitterness from a writer I admire concerned me.

I didn't avoid the title, even though I've never been much of a Supergirl fan (I read every issue). I didn't avoid the title because the "Earth Angel" angle was off-putting (although I had to struggle with it at times). And I am not a reader who "inevitably" turns against a writer who's been with a book for a long period of time — quite the contrary; I get annoyed by musical chairs behind the word processor, appreciate professional longevity, and genuinely enjoy the comfort zone of a familiar writer handling a character he or she is familiar with.

Maybe I'm unusual. But maybe not — and I hope that's of some comfort to David, who has often stated that he expects adverse reaction from fickle fans when he's "overstayed his welcome." Tain't necessarily so, McGee.

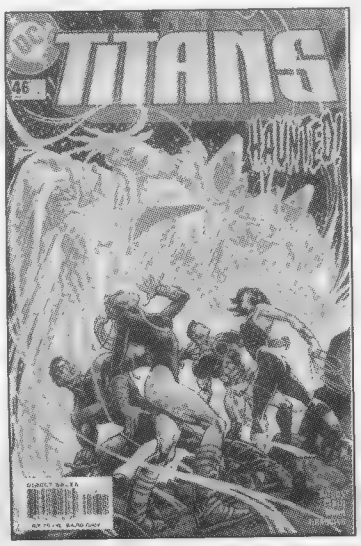
I liked *Supergirl*, as I like Peter David's writing in general. It also exposed me in depth to the excellent work of Leonard Kirk and Gary Frank, for which I'm grateful. I'm sorry to see it go. And I'll be there for David's next effort, whatever it shall be. As long as he continues writing with wit and authority, he'll never overstay his welcome with me.

• ***Superman: Man of Steel*** died a short-lived death with #134, shipping Jan. 2. February sees the first issue of the 12-issue *Superman: Metropolis*, with the implication that some new Super-book will launch from there.

I can't get too worked up about this.

• ***Titans*** ends with #50 (shipping Feb. 26), followed by ***Young Justice***'s demise with #55 (March 5).

As has been thoroughly covered in the fan press, both are being canceled to re-launch with an eye toward bringing them in line with the new animated series. We'll see a new *Teen Titans* series that looks like the cartoon and a new *Outsiders* series to more or less find a home for the unused characters.



As a long-suffering fan, it comes as absolutely no surprise to me when a comics company starts leaping through hoops to alter its long-established characters to conform to an ephemeral take on those characters in another medium. I absolutely loathe this practice, but I doubt DC's powers that be care what I think — especially with potential dollar signs dancing in their collective head. But I'll go on record that I think this is a mistake; the cartoon may last a season or two, but what is being done to beloved comic-book titles will last considerably longer.

I won't really miss *Titans* all that much — that title's glory days have been long past for a while and the series wasn't very interesting. But I'm hoppin' mad about *Young Justice*.

This was a damn fine series. For a change, a gang of comic-book kids were written as *kids* instead of small adults, and the title never failed to give me at least one out-loud chuckle per issue. I loved Snapper Carr's rehabilitation into a viable character (begun in *Hourman* and slammed through the hoop in *YJ*). I loved Red Tornado's pained patience with his charges, and I've never liked Red Tornado. I loved Wonder Girl's quiet crush on Superboy and Cissie's moral dilemma and Cissie's mom's intrusive meddling and Impulse's naïve bumblings and Robin's trust issues and Superboy's thoughtless confidence and Secret's secret and Li'l Lobo's dark subtext and the Whiz Wagon's subtle personality and Empress's brazenness.

In short, I loved these kids as if they were real.

And, to return to my *Supergirl* theme, Peter David and Todd Nauck stayed with this title from the outset, helping it to grow, making it deeper and richer, issue after issue after issue. I knew what I'd get each month with *Young Justice*, and I hotly anticipated it. Somebody give these guys an award of some kind.

And *Young Justice* was making money! Yes! It was profitable! It had a deliriously happy fan base! Why didn't they make a cartoon of *that*?

(The Captain takes a deep breath.)

"A gang of comic-book kids were written as kids instead of small adults."

I'm a big boy, and I'll take a look at *Teen Titans* and *Outsiders*. I don't hold out much hope for the *Titans* title, since it's using characters (like Raven) whose story arc is pretty much over and who've been canceled time and again. And it will be nice to see Dick Grayson step outside the shadow of The Bat in *Outsiders*, although some of the picks for team members have me scratching my head. Perhaps I'll be surprised, and I hope I am.

But, boy, am I going to miss *Young Justice*.

The Canceled Comics Cavalcade has gone berserk and taken over the column, so we've only room for this one missive, from ***Len Gould*** *of* ***Boca Raton, Fla.****:*

As a comics fan for more than 25 years now, this is my first letter to anyone, so be gentle!

Your column is the first I read each week in ***CBG***, and I have been following with interest each of the many topics you go back and forth over with your readers. I figured it was time to throw in my 2¢ worth.

Best Covers: Easily my favorite is *Avengers* Vol. 1 #44 (Sep 67). This was my first "Silver Age" comic book. I was with my parents in a used bookstore when I found it, and only 12 years old. There is so much happening on this cover it is astounding. Captain America slugging it out with The Red Guardian in the center with the rest of the team (and Natasha) fighting the Soviet Army. Wow — this cover made me an Avengers (and comics) fan for life.

Other covers that stopped me in my tracks over the years were few and far between, but, when I came across one, I knew I was in for a great story: *Moon Knight* Vol. 1 #25 (Nov 82 — for that matter, almost any Bill Sienkiewicz *Moon Knight* cover); *All-Star Squadron* #1 (Sep 81); *Thor* #337 (Nov 83) with Beta-Ray Bill smashing the old Thor logo.

Best Single Issue: This one is easy compared to the "best covers" topic. I don't remember the exact issue but it was *Avengers* (Vol. 1) right around #178-180. It was the last chapter in the Korvac story arc. I vividly remember my heart pounding, as Korvac killed Avenger after Avenger. I had no idea how it would end, or even, for that matter, what the heck was happening. Also, and just as important, I didn't feel cheated at the end, either.

Worst issues: Sorry, fans, I know a lot of you will disagree, but for this category I nominate every Superman and Batman appearance from 1950 to 1965. Anyone want to second?

The Captain *replies:*

The issue you're trying to remember is likely *Avengers* #177, "The Hope and the Slaughter!" (Nov 78). It was written by Jim Shooter and drawn by David Wenzel. I also enjoyed that story arc — I was a savvy enough reader at the time to recognize that any story that involves time travel allows writers to kill characters, because you can always change time and bring them back. Nevertheless, the climactic battle with Korvac was still a heart-stopper — Shooter was a canny enough writer that each and every death was convincing, as was Thor's berserker vengeance at the end. A Thunder God unleashed is a terrifying thing in and of itself!

I also warmly recall *Avengers* #44 — as I do most John Buscema *Avengers* covers. For a guy who said he didn't like drawing super-heroes, he sure did it convincingly! (Incidentally, you referred to #45, which I changed in your letter to #44 — #45 was "Blitzkrieg in Central Park!" and featured The Super-Adaptoid and made Hercules a formal member. The sad commentary here is that I didn't even have to look that up.)

As to your assertion about DC's Big Two being awful from 1950 to 1965 ... oh, my. Well, you asked me to be kind, so I'll only note that every fan has a different personal Golden Age, and I cut my fannish eyeteeth on Curt Swan's Superman and Superman-Batman *World's Finest* team-ups in the early '60s. I have extremely fond memories of those issues, so you'll have to look elsewhere for a second! ✦

Andrew Smith writes the ***Captain Comics*** *syndicated newspaper column. He can be reached at* ***capncomics@aol.com*** *or on his message board* ***www.eboards4all.com/07422****. Please include a city and state of address.*

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96 gd 2.0	$99.00	174 vg 4.0	$139.00	287 vg+ 4.5	$40.00	383 fn/vf 7.0	$29.00	423 vf 8.0	$30.00
102 gd- 1.8	$119.00	176 gd- 1.8	$59.00	288 fn+ 6.5	$49.00	383 fn/vf 7.0	$25.00	424 vf- 7.5	$30.00
103 fa/gd 1.5	$69.00	177 gd 2.0	$59.00	290 gd/vg 3.0	$26.00	384 fn+ 6.5	$30.00	426 vf- 7.5	$18.00
103 vf 8.0	$550.00	180 pr 0.5	$13.00	293 gd+ 2.5	$27.00	384 vfn+ 8.5	$45.00	429 fn/vf 7.0	$14.00
104 fa 1.0	$49.00	185 fa 1.0	$50.00	294 vg+ 4.5	$40.00	386 fn/vf 7.0	$29.00	430 vf 8.0	$16.00
105 vg 4.0	$149.00	186 vg/fn 5.0	$149.00	295 gd 2.0	$19.00	387 fn- 5.5	$25.00	433 vf 8.0	$16.00
107 gd/vg 3.0	$149.00	189 gd 2.5	$79.00	296 fn/vfn 7.0	$89.00	387 fn/vf 7.0	$39.00	437 vf- 7.5	$30.00
108 fn+ 6.5	$399.00	190 fa/gd 1.5	$99.00	297 vg- 3.5	$31.00	387 fn/vf 7.0	$39.00	437 fn/vf 7.0	$25.00
110 vg- 3.5	$189.00	200 gd- 1.8	$79.00	299 vg-/fn 5.0	$24.00	387 vfn- 7.5	$40.00	438 vf+ 8.5	$55.00
111 gd/vg 3.0	$149.00	207 vg 4.0	$109.00	299 vg 4.0	$25.00	387 fn 6.0	$25.00	439 fn/vf 7.0	$36.00
112 gd 2.0	$109.00	209 gd+ 2.5	$69.00	300 fn/vfn 7.0	$89.00	388 fn/vf 7.0	$36.00	440 vf 8.0	$45.00
114 fa 1.0	$89.00	210 gd/vg 3.0	$79.00	301 vg- 3.5	$19.00	389 vfn 8.0	$40.00	441 vg/f 5.0	$28.00
115 gd+ 2.5	$99.00	210 gd/vg 3.0	$79.00	308 vg+ 4.5	$19.00	390 vf- 7.5	$40.00	441 vf 8.0	$45.00
116 vg- 3.5	$49.00	222 gd 2.0	$54.00	309 vg+ 4.5	$19.00	390 vf- 7.5	$40.00	441 vf 8.0	$45.00
117 fr 1.0	$75.00	225 vg- 3.5	$799.00	316 fn- 5.5	$30.00	391 fn/vfn 7.0	$35.00	443 vf 8.0	$45.00
118 fa/gd 1.5	$99.00	226 fa/gd 1.5	$129.00	323 vg+ 4.5	$19.00	393 vf 8.0	$35.00	445 fn/vf 7.0	$40.00
119 fa/gd 1.5	$69.00	230 gd- 1.8	$59.00	325 vfn- 7.5	$75.00	394 vfn 8.0	$35.00	454 vf+ 8.5	$20.00
119 fa/gd 1.5	$69.00	235 gd- 1.8	$79.00	334 fn+ 6.5	$19.00	394 f/vf 7.0	$22.00	466 vf 8.0	$19.00
122 vg- 3.5	$250.00	236 fa/gd 1.5	$39.00	335 vf- 7.5	$22.00	397 vfn 8.0	$45.00	467 vf+ 8.5	$28.00
123 gd/vg 3.0	$125.00	236 gd/vg 3.0	$55.00	337 vf- 7.5	$20.00	400 fn- 5.5	$75.00	468 vf 8.0	$22.00
127 gd+ 2.5	$99.00	238 gd 2.0	$49.00	338 vf- 7.5	$20.00	400 fn/vf 7.0	$90.00	468 vf- 7.5	$22.00
127 fa 1.0	$75.00	241 gd+ 2.5	$49.00	339 f/vf 7.0	$39.00	400 vfn- 7.5	$150.00	470 vf+ 8.5	$12.00
127 fn+ 5.5	$280.00	243 gd/vg 3.0	$59.00	350 vf- 7.5	$25.00	401 vfn+ 8.5	$45.00	471 vf 8.0	$19.00
128 gd+ 2.5	$160.00	244 fr- 5.5	$79.00	352 f/vf 7.5	$32.00	402 vfn 8.0	$45.00	471 vf+ 8.5	$22.00
129 fa 1.0	$75.00	245 gd 2.0	$39.00	354 fn 5.5	$29.00	402 vf+ 8.5	$45.00	472 vf+ 8.5	$22.00
131 gd+ 2.5	$99.00	247 gd+ 2.5	$49.00	358 vf 8.0	$30.00	402 vfn 8.0	$45.00	472 vf+ 8.5	$18.00
136 fa/gd 1.5	$75.00	248 vg 4.0	$59.00	359 vg 4.0	$90.00	403 vf+ 8.5	$35.00	473 vfn 8.0	$32.00
138 gd- 1.8	$75.00	256 gd 2.0	$39.00	360 vf- 7.5	$15.00	407 vfn- 7.5	$32.00	474 vf+ 8.5	$19.00
143 gd- 1.8	$70.00	265 vf/fi 5.0	$39.00	362 vf- 7.5	$15.00	408 fn/vf 7.0	$24.00	475 vf 8.0	$32.00
149 gd- 1.8	$125.00	269 vg 4.0	$59.00	365 fn- 5.5	$20.00	410 vf 8.0	$35.00	475 vf- 7.5	$38.00
150 pr 0.5	$35.00	273 gd/vg 3.0	$39.00	370 fn+ 6.5	$24.00	410 fn/vf 7.0	$24.00	476 vf/nm 9.0	$99.00
155 vg- 3.5	$160.00	274 vg 4.0	$49.00	371 fn+ 6.5	$30.00	410 vfn 8.0	$45.00	476 vf 8.0	$32.00
157 gd- 1.8	$60.00	275 vg- 3.5	$44.00	372 vf- 7.5	$20.00	413 vf 8.0	$28.00	476 vf+ 8.5	$38.00
161 gd/vg 3.0	$99.00	277 fn/vfn 7.0	$100.00	372 vf 8.0	$20.00	416 fn- 5.5	$20.00	477 vf+ 8.0	$19.00
164 gd- 1.8	$55.00	279 vg- 3.5	$44.00	379 fn+ 6.5	$20.00	418 vf 8.0	$30.00	477 vf+ 8.5	$22.00
165 fa/gd 1.5	$50.00	279 f/vf 7.0	$90.00	380 vf+ 8.5	$20.00	419 vf 8.0	$30.00	477 vf/nm 9.0	$39.00
167 vg/f 8.0	$350.00	280 vg 4.0	$50.00	381 vf- 7.5	$20.00	420 vf 8.0	$25.00	477 vf/n+ 8.5	$35.00
171 fa/gd 1.5	$99.00	283 vg 4.0	$35.00	381 vf/n- 7.5	$40.00	420 fn- 6.5	$24.00	478 vf/nm 9.0	$32.00
172 vg- 3.5	$120.00	285 fn- 5.5	$51.00	382 vf- 7.5	$20.00	421 fn/vf 7.0	$25.00	479 vf+ 8.5	$22.00

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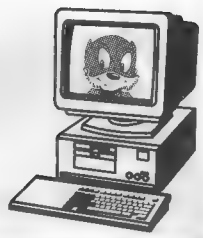
THE GUIDE

*"At **CBG**, we believe that every reader of comics is also a **collector** of comics. We don't throw them away when we're done. While comics are an entertainment medium, certain comic books do accrue value — almost always, older comics in short supply in good condition. It's our mission to watch the secondary market to help you protect the value of your comics and save on the classic comics you want."*

Salute!

Chuck Rozanski toasts two enterprising companies.

Tales from the Database, Page 44



The ways people are buying, selling, and trading classic comic books today!

CGC on eBay

Auctions closed between Jan. 5-11, 2003
All met their reserve price.
Populations reported are as of Aug. 23

***Marvel Comics* #1**
in CGC 2.5 (GD+)
Only copy in grade; there are 8 better, including 1 in 9.0
$22,499

***Action Comics* #7**
in CGC 2.0 (GD)
1 of 2 copies in grade; there are 4 better, including 1 in 7.0
$5,900

***Amazing Spider-Man* Vol. 1 #5**
in CGC 9.2 (NM-)
1 of 9 copies in grade; there are 10 better, including 4 in 9.6
$3,275

***Human Torch* #12**
in CGC 8.0 (VF)
1 of 2 copies in grade; there are 2 better, including 1 in 9.0
$2,750

***Amazing Fantasy* #15**
in CGC 3.5 (VG-)
1 of 20 copies in grade; there are 141 better, including 1 in 9.6
$2,599

***Batman* #4**
in CGC 7.5 (VF-)
1 of 3 copies in grade; there are 3 better, including 1 in 9.2
$2,550

***Amazing Spider-Man* Vol. 1 #6**
in CGC 9.2 (NM-)
1 of 14 copies in grade; there are 14 better, including 1 in 9.8
$2,500

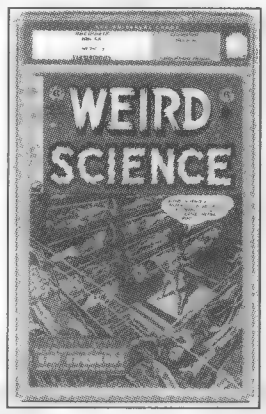
Early March brings All-Star auction

Originals and high-grade comics are featured

By **Nathan Melby**

All Star Auctions will conduct its 11th auction on March 1 and 2, featuring feature original cover and comic-strip art along with CGC-graded comics.

All Star Co-Owner Nadia Mannarino told ***CBG***, "The premiere piece is the *Amazing Spider-Man* #40 original cover art. With *Spider-Man* being a top-grossing movie and Green Goblin as villain on the cover, this came at the perfect time."



The John Romita cover originally appeared on the finale of the two-part battle in which The Green Goblin learned Spider-Man's true identity, while the wall-crawler learned his arch-foe's.

Among the comics in the sale are the highest-graded copy of the first issue of *Walt Disney's Comics & Stories* (graded 8.5, VF+), a Gaines File Copy of *Weird Science* #20 (graded 9.6, NM+), and a *Silver Surfer* #4 (graded 9.4, NM).

There will also be CGC-graded copies from such pedigrees as Mile High, White Mountain, San Francisco, Denver, Crowley, Dell File Copies, Gaines File Copies, Bethlehem, and Big Apple collections. Also included are about 50 squarebound annuals (including early *Spider-Man Annuals*) and similar compilations that were still being CGC-graded in mid-January.

Besides the *Amazing Spider-Man* #40 cover, the event will feature many other pieces of original art, including a Frank Frazetta and Al Williamson splash page from *Crime SuspenStories* #17, and original art by Jim Steranko, Carmine Infantino, Carl Barks, and many others. A complete set of the pages from *Eternals* #2 by Jack Kirby, including the cover, will also be offered.

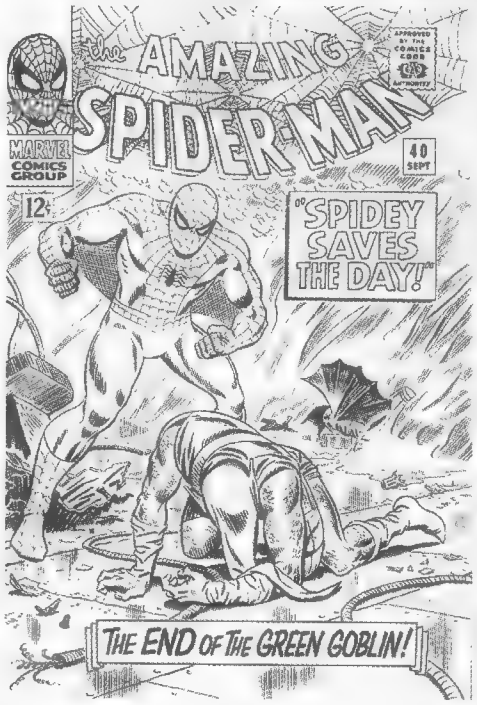
Comic-strip collectors will find items of interest, too. Mannarino said, "In the strip-art realm, we have an owner collection that hasn't seen the light of day in 15 years."

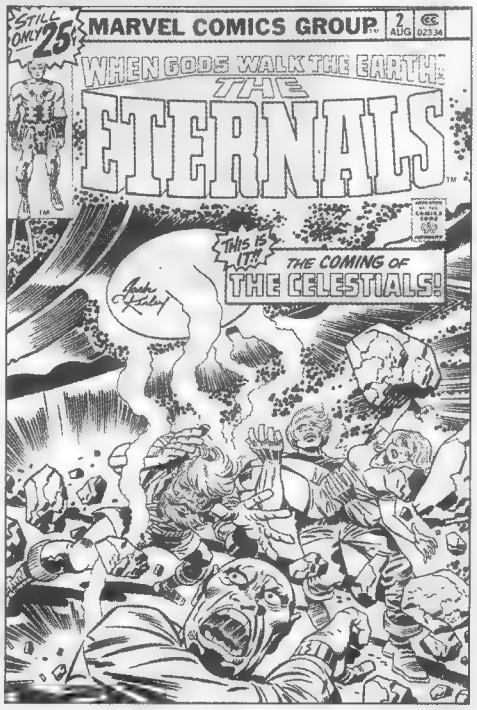
Among strips in the collection are an early *Dick Tracy* featuring Tess Trueheart and her mother before the tragic events in her family that led Tracy to commit himself fully to fighting crime, an original *Little Orphan Annie* daily, and many more.

The auction will take place via phone and Internet. Interested buyers can register at All-Star's website at *www.allstarauc.com*.

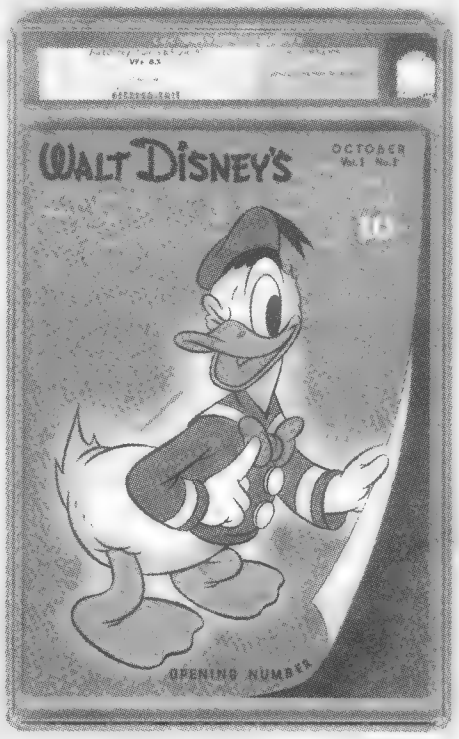
Those interested in consigning can call (201) 652-1305.

A catalog is available for $7 plus $3 shipping and handling to 122 West End Ave., Ridgewood, NJ 07450. ✦





*Original art in All-Star's spring sale includes the cover of **Amazing Spider-Man** #40 and **Eternals** #2.*



*A copy of **Walt Disney's Comics & Stories** #1 is also on the sale bill.*

INSIDE THIS SECTION

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CBG's EXCLUSIVE CGC PRICE INDEX

For CGC-graded comics auctioned, ***Comics Buyer's Guide*** compared the differences between the **median closing price offered** at each grade and ***The Standard Catalog of Comic Books*** price for an ungraded NM copy.

COMICS PUBLISHED BEFORE 1990

CGC comics graded **9.9** "Mint" ...sold for a median price of **NM+2456%** (or **25.56** times the NM guide price) in the quarter beginning Oct. 1
*Sample: **42** (67% of all) 9.9 copies sold on eBay*

CGC comics graded **9.8** "Near Mint/ Mint" ...sold for a median price of **NM+1150%** (or **12.5** times the NM guide price) in the quarter beginning Oct. 1
*Sample: **949** (58% of all) 9.8 copies sold on eBay*

CGC comics graded **9.6** "Near Mint+" ...sold for a median price of **NM+593%** (or **6.93** times the NM guide price) in the quarter beginning Oct. 1
*Sample: **1,996** (60% of all) 9.6 copies sold on eBay*

CGC comics graded **9.4** "Near Mint" ...sold for a median price of **NM+370%** (or **4.7** times the NM guide price) in the quarter beginning Oct. 1
*Sample: **2,323** (63% of all) 9.4 copies sold on eBay*

CBG's definition: Barely perceptible wear, tight spine. Some discoloration acceptable in older comics.

CGC comics graded **9.2** "Near Mint-" ...sold for a median price of **NM+150%** (or **2.5** times the NM guide price) in the quarter beginning Oct. 1
*Sample: **1,429** (62% of all) 9.2 copies sold on eBay*

CGC comics graded **9.0** "Very Fine/ Near Mint" ...sold for a median price of **NM+60%** (or **1.6** times the NM guide price) in the quarter beginning Oct. 1
*Sample: **1,225** (62% of all) 9.0 copies sold on eBay*

CGC comics graded **8.5** "Very Fine+" ...sold for a median of **NM +9%** (or **1.9** times the NM guide price) in the quarter beginning Oct. 1
*Sample: **901** (65% of all) 8.5 copies sold on eBay*

CGC comics graded **8.0** "Very Fine" ...sold for a median price of **NM -20%** (or **0.8** times the NM guide price) in the quarter beginning Oct. 1
*Sample: **759** (60% of all) 8.0 copies sold on eBay*

CBG's definition: Slight creases, wrinkles at staples, some loss of gloss. Otherwise a flat, clean issue.

CGC comics graded **7.5** "Very Fine-" ...sold for a median price of **NM -41%** (or **0.59** times the NM guide price) in the quarter beginning Oct. 1
*Sample: **576** (61% of all) 7.5 copies sold on eBay*

CGC comics graded **7.0** "Fine/ Very Fine" ...sold for a median price of **NM -54%** (or **0.46** times the NM guide price) in the quarter beginning Oct. 1
*Sample: **521** (61% of all) 7.0 copies sold on eBay*

CGC comics graded **6.0** "Fine" ...sold for a median price of **NM -69%** (or **0.31** times the NM guide price) in the quarter beginning Oct. 1
*Sample: **247** (62% of all) 6.0 copies sold on eBay*

CBG's definition: Cover worn but clean; no tape or writing. Stress lines, more rounded corners.

EYE ON eBay

Jan. 5-11, 2003
CGC auctions
by **Darryl Buchanan**

Volume and total bidding activity on eBay is slowly picking up after the lull over the Christmas holidays. This week, there was good bidding action on a handful of Golden Age copies. The top five bids of the week were all for very nice Golden Age issues. As to the Silver Age, most weeks, an *Amazing Spider-Man* #1 or *Amazing Fantasy* #15 pokes its way into the Top 5, but this week the only copies of those comics offered were fairly low-grade.

GOLDEN AGE: A beautiful *Green Lantern* #4 brought a high bid of $7,100 this week. The issue was graded 9.0 (VF/NM) and had white pages. The color of the cover, both front and back, on this copy was truly exceptional. It looked more like a book that was purchased last week, rather than 60 years ago. It was from the "San Francisco" pedigree collection.

SILVER AGE: This week, there were no fewer than 12 auctions featuring the ever-popular *Incredible Hulk* #181. This issue is popular, of course, not for The Hulk himself, but for the first full appearance of Wolverine. There were two auctions with issues graded 9.2 (NM-). They brought $1,075 and $1,050, respectively. Most of the rest of the issues were in decent 7.5 (VF-) to 9.0 (VF/NM) condition, with a single 5.5 (FN-) bringing up the rear. If you ever buy a copy of this comic book that has *not* been graded by CGC, remember to check the inside to be sure that the Marvel Value Stamp has not been cut out. CGC would normally catch this and give a Qualified grade to such a copy.

A *Showcase* #4 in 6.5 (FN+) brought a high bid of $4,045. This presents the origin and first appearance of the Silver Age Flash and began the Silver Age.

IN DEPTH: CGC action on eBay is slowly recovering from the Christmas lull. Total bidding on CGC auctions this week was $235,800 compared to $202,919 last week and $193,294 two weeks ago. Volume remains a little depressed, with 1,503 auctions recorded receiving bids versus 1,651 last week and 1,351 two weeks ago. This week, there were 28 comics receiving bids of $1,000 or more versus 26 last week and 31 two weeks ago.

Darryl Buchanan can be reached at *dbuchanan@thecomicsheet.com*.

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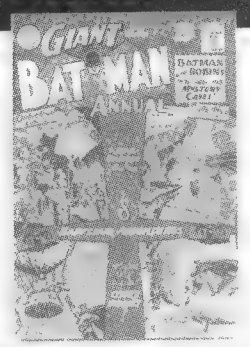

- **Sample collector rates:** $3,000 for $14, $10,000 for $38, $25,000 for $95, $50,000 for $190, $100,000 for $278, $200,000 for $418. Above $200,000, rate is $1.40 per $1,000.
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Salute!

Chuck Rozanski offers congratulations to a pair of outstanding projects

By **Chuck Rozanski**

This week I have good news to report from the perspective of future growth in the comics industry. First of all, I just received a call from Mark Alessi, the president of CrossGeneration Comics. He was calling to tell me that my column of a few weeks ago, about the fantastic new CrossGen Comics Teaching Guides, generated an incredible wave of interest in their new program for utilizing graphic novels for teaching young people how to read in public schools. According to Mark, they received requests for information, not only from hundreds of teachers, but also from Cable News Network (CNN) and from two very important consumer magazines: *Teen Week* and *Better Homes and Gardens*. It seems that the idea of creating a comprehensive program designed to integrate comics into the classroom struck a chord with a great number of influential people.

As a response to this overwhelming request for information, Mark has taken the unprecedented step of putting the entire *Meridian* and *Ruse* teachers' guides on the CrossGen website for free examination. You can read them either by utilizing the red link on the CrossGen home page at *www.crossgen.com* or go directly into the teaching guides via *www.crossgen.com/education/*. In addition, there is now a special message board forum designed to allow teachers to engage in dialog about the guides and a special e-mail address (*education@crossgen.com*) for all those who wish to provide feedback directly to the creators of the guides.

I hope that all of you understand the risks that Mark has exposed himself to by putting the entire contents of his two publications online. While these are works in progress, CrossGen could still be easily ripped off by those who would take free advantage of all the thousands of hours of hard work that the CrossGen staff put into creating these great books. Mark told me that he considers that an acceptable risk, however, if allowing everyone to evaluate the teaching guides for free will add to the growing nationwide excitement generated by this wonderful new teaching program. I think you have to really admire that kind of risk-taking and progressive thought. That's exactly what the comics industry has been sorely lacking during the past 10 years.

Along those same lines, I am delighted to pass along my congratulations to Steve Geppi and Gemstone Publishing for their brilliant coup in negotiating a new master contract to bring Disney comics back into publication in America. Whenever I'm exhibiting in Europe, and the subject of the lack of Disney comics in the United States enters a conversation, I hear complete bewilderment that America cannot support a vigorous line of Disney comics. They are among the best-selling comics in every country in Europe, as well as many other countries around the world, so no one in Europe can understand why they don't sell here.

The reasons Disney comics have not succeeded here in the past are complex. Bruce Hamilton revived them successfully twice: first after the hiatus brought on by the failure of Gold Key and Whitman, then again after Disney's short-lived fiasco in self-publishing. In both instances, Bruce ended up in major conflict with Disney over contractual issues. Those disagreements became so bitter that Bruce finally returned the license to Disney. It was his understanding at that time (1999) that Steve was on the brink of a new deal with Disney, so he felt confident that Gemstone would be able to hire most of the staff he had assembled at Another Rainbow. Well, it took years of difficult negotiations, but the Disney-Gemstone deal was finally signed in December. Effective in June, *Walt Disney's Comics & Stories* and *Uncle Scrooge* will return as 64-page prestige-format series, at a $6.95 cover price. If those sell well, plans are to revive *Donald Duck* and *Mickey Mouse* (as *Mickey Mouse & Friends*) as 32-page standard comics at a $2.95 cover price.

As for the Another Rainbow staff, I am delighted to report that three key staff members were able to answer Steve Geppi's call to duty. John Clark is already in place as editor in chief, Gary Leach will be the new art director, and Susan Daigle-Leach has been hired as the production manager. With those three key staffers in place, I feel confident that the new Disney comics line will be just as competently produced as any issues ever were in the past. Initial issues will focus on reprinting material originally produced by Egmont in Europe, but Clark indicated that negotiations are under way that may result in producing entirely new material in the not-so-distant future.

To get the new Disney Comics line off to a great start, Steve has made a very bold decision. Despite the fact that he will have no books available for sale yet on May 2, Steve has decided to take the risk to produce a spectacular Disney comic book for Free Comic Book Day. In the June issue of Diamond's *Previews* magazine, there will be a solicitation for a special edition of *Maharajah Donald*, a Carl Barks masterpiece first published in 1946 as *March of Comics* #4. I cannot think of a better comic book to pass out to young people on Free Comic Book Day. In fact, I will commit right now to purchase a minimum of 5,000 copies — all of which I will guarantee to give away for free. I figure it's the least I can do to try to help Steve revive this all-important part of the American comics publishing universe.

In closing, I want to salute both Mark Alessi and Steve Geppi for having the vision — and the guts — to take on the risks entailed with the creation of these bold new programs. As long as I see leaders in the comics industry coming forth with dynamic new initiatives to introduce young people into the joys of comics and graphic entertainment, I'll retain at least some sense of optimism for the future of our world. Thanks, guys! ✦

***Chuck Rozanski**, owner of Mile High Comics, the world's largest online comics retailer, can be reached directly at **chuck@milehighcomics.com**. To receive his weekly e-mail newsletter, visit **milehighcomics.com** and sign the guest book.*

What customers are buying ...

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1. *Action Comics* #30 in GD	$230.40
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3. *Action Comics* #34 in GD	$128.00
4. *Adventure Comics* #248 in VG	$115.20
5. *Spec. Spider-Man* #2 (magazine) in NM	$110.00
6. *House of Secrets* #3 in VG	$108.00
7. *Vampirella* #9 (magazine) in NM	$98.00
8. *Jesse James* #1 in FN	$86.40
9. *Detective Comics* #169 in GD	$80.60
10. *Silver Surfer* Vol. 1 #1 in GD	$76.80

Top CGC-graded comics sold
by Mile High, from Jan. 3-9, 2003:

1. *Amazing Spider-Man* Vol. 1 #2 in 2.5	$499.20
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3. *Strange Tales* #147 in 9.6	$120.00
4. *Ultimate Spider-Man* #2 (variant) in 9.0	$96.00
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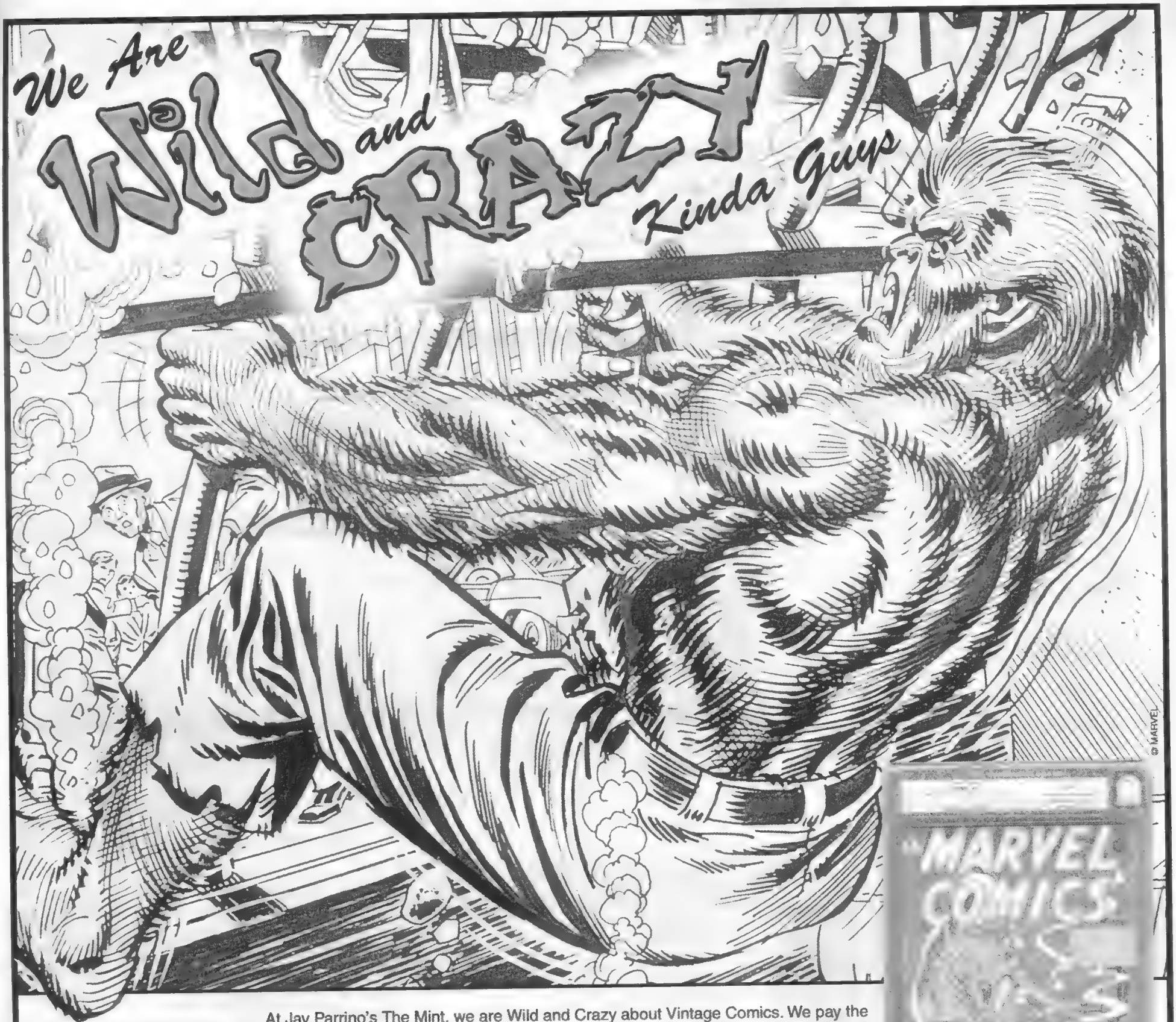
7. *Sandman* #1 in 8.5	$53.75
8. *Batman* #254 in 9.0	$48.00
9. *Showcase* #94 in 9.6	$48.00
10. *Avengers* Vol. 1 #55 in 9.0	$40.00

Top Modern comics sold
by Mile High, from Jan. 3-9, 2003:

1. *Incredible Hulk* #181 in VG	$327.60
2. *Transformers: Gen 1* #1 (incentive) in NM	$140.00
3. *Amazing Spider-Man* Vol. 1 #97 in FN	$75.60
4. *Amazing Spider-Man* Vol. 1 #98 in FN	$75.60
5. *Amazing Spider-Man* Vol. 1 #238 in NM	$60.00
6. *X-Men* Vol. 1 #121 (signed) in FN	$60.00
7. *New Gods* Vol. 1 #1 in NM	$60.00
8. *X-Men* Vol. 1 #121 in VF	$57.60
9. *Marvel Treasury Special: 2001* in FN	$56.00
10. *Ultimate X-Men* #1 in NM	$52.50

Top-selling comics
by Mile High, from Jan. 3-9, 2003:

1. *G.I. Joe Special Missions* #1
2. *Captain America* Vol. 3 #1 (variant)
3. *Transformers: War Within* #2
4. *Justice League of America* #200
5. *Incredible Hulk* Vol. 2 #45
6. *Batman* #609
7. *Man of Steel* #2
8. *Captain America: Dead Men Running* #1
9. *Spawn* #9
10. *Factor-X* #2



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RESALE REPORT

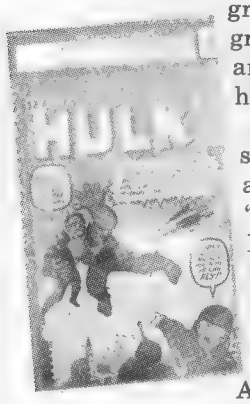
Jan. 12-18, 2003

Compiled by **Brent Frankenhoff**
CBG Managing Editor

Early *Hulk* lot brings $5,000

Five of the first six issues of *Incredible Hulk* sold for a total of $5,000 on Jan. 14 on eBay. The issues are *Incredible Hulk* #1 (May 62) graded 4.5 (VG+), #3 (Sep 62) graded 7.0 (F/VF), #4 (Nov 62) graded 7.0 (F/VF), #5 (Jan 63) graded 7.0 (F/VF), and #6 (Mar 63) graded 4.5 (VG+).

For #1 there are 67 graded better, with the highest graded 9.4 (NM). For #3 there are 22 graded better, with the highest graded 9.4 (NM). For #4 there are 36 graded better, with the highest graded 9.4 (NM). For #5 there are 32 graded better, with the highest graded 9.6 (NM+). For #6 there are 63 graded better, with the highest graded 9.6 (NM+).



Jack Kirby pencilled each issue, which featured first appearances of The Hulk, General "Thunderbolt" Ross, Rick Jones, Betsy Ross, Ringmaster, Cannonball, The Clown, Teena the Fat Lady, Bruto the Strongman, Tyrranus, Metal Master, and the Teen Brigade.

After #6, the series was canceled and the character moved to *Tales to Astonish*, where he shared the title with Giant Man until June 1968, when he returned to his own title, picking up the numbering from *Tales to Astonish* with #102.

– Nathan Melby

ComicLink Comments

By **Josh Nathanson**

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #124

Marvel • Sep 1973 • Cover 20¢

After discovering a mysterious red gem on the moon, J. Jonah Jameson's astronaut son, John, becomes The Man-Wolf in this issue. According to the latest CGC census report, this is the highest issue graded to date. A 9.8 black cover with white pages is a winning combination.

SOLD IN NM/MT (CGC 9.8) FOR: $1,800

FANTASTIC FOUR #26

Marvel • May 1964 • Cover 12¢

One of the great two-part Thing vs. Hulk fights concluded in this issue, when The Avengers joined the fray. The sold copy was one of only nine copies to receive a grade of 9.4 from CGC. Only two copies have been assigned a higher grade. The sold issue had off-white pages.

SOLD IN NM (CGC 9.4) FOR: $2,350

AVENGERS #15

Marvel • Apr 1965 • Cover 12¢

Long-time Captain America foe and leader of The Masters of Evil Baron Zemo met his end in this early *Avengers* issue. His son would later pick up the mantle. CGC has graded 12 copies 9.4 with only one higher (at 9.8). The sold copy had cream to off-white pages.

SOLD IN NM (CGC 9.4) FOR: $700

TALES OF SUSPENSE #58

Marvel • Nov 1964 • Cover 12¢

Captain America made his debut in *Tales of Suspense* in a book-length adventure where he faced a fake Iron Man. The issue also contains the second appearance of Kraven the Hunter. It is one of the most highly demanded *Tales of Suspense* issues. The sold copy had off-white to white pages.

SOLD IN VF/NM (CGC 9.0) FOR: $585

FANTASTIC FOUR #2

Marvel • Jan 1962 • Cover 10¢

Intergalactic villains The Skrulls made their first appearance in The Fantastic Four's second issue. These particular Skrulls would later reappear in *Avengers.* Four 7.5s have been graded by CGC to date. The sold copy had off-white pages, and CGC notes include "pre-Marvel chipping," a defect that brought this down to the 7.5 grade.

SOLD IN VF- (CGC 7.5) FOR: $1,550

X-MEN #1

Marvel • Sep 1963 • Cover 12¢

The X-Men, Professor Xavier, and Magneto all made their first appearances in this issue, which began Marvel's mutant franchise. The sold copy was solid with an accumulation of minor defects but no major ones to speak of. The page quality was cream to off-white.

SOLD IN FN- (CGC 5.5) FOR: $1,300

Josh Nathanson is CEO of ComicLink (www.comiclink.com), an online marketplace where a wide selection of condition-verified, investment-quality comic books, comic art, and related memorabilia are bought and sold. For more information, or to sell items, e-mail Josh Nathanson at ***buysell@comiclink.com*** *or call (718) 423-6079.*

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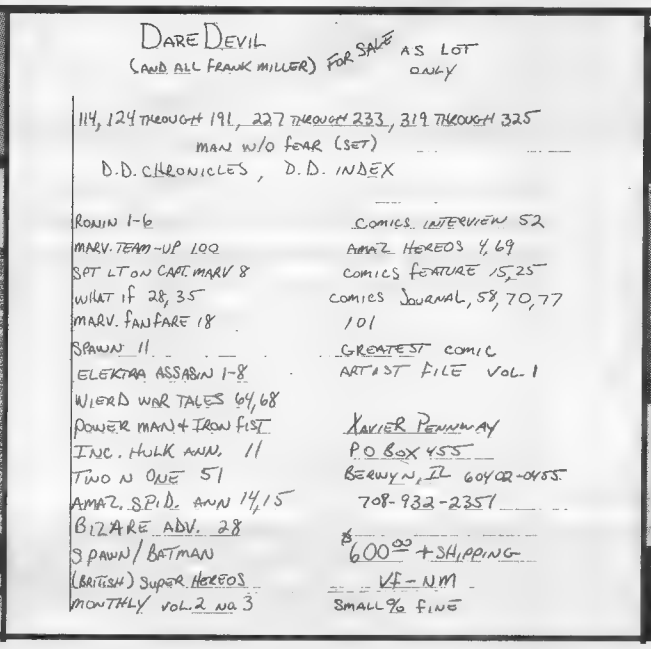

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Jim Hanley's Universe
4 W. 33rd St.
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325 New Dorp Lane
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5591 Ridge Rd.
Parma, OH 44129
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Bookery Fantasy
16 W. Main Street
Fairborn, OH 45324
937-879-1408
E-mail: bookeryfan@aol.com
Publishers of "Ultimate Guide To Pulps" – buying pulps, comics 1930's - 1960's, paperbacks, movie posters.

British Papermill
5733 Brice Outlet Mall
Columbus, OH 43232
614-577-0220
Comics, toys, GI Joe, Star Wars, Magic.

Parker's Records & Comics
1222 Suite C Rt. 28
Milford, OH 45150
513-575-3665
Web Site: www.parkersrc.com
New comics, 28,000 back issues, Silver Age & up, supplies, gaming. Want lists accepted.

PENNSYLVANIA

Collectible Dreams & Knight-Mares
12 N. Market Street
Selinsgrove, PA 17870
570-372-0824
New and back issue comics, gaming, collectibles! Visit our web site: www.collectibledreams.com

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TENNESSEE

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Great Escape, The
1925 Broadway
Nashville, TN 37203
615-327-0646
Comics, CDs, records, tapes, video games, movies, baseball cards, gaming, toys, science fiction, non-sports cards

TEXAS

Heritage Comics Auctions
100 Highland Park Village, 2nd Floor
Dallas, TX 75205
214-252-4392 • FAX: 214-520-6968
Auctions@HeritageComics.com
Web site: www.HeritageComics.com
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6528 FM 2609
Nacogdoches, TX 75961
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Comics, cards, gaming, collectables, Lone Star Shows, www.lonestarcomicon.com

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Milwaukee, WI 53207
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This section features listings for retail comics stores around the U.S. Traveling comics collectors of all types search for new stores to dig through on their vacations, business trips, etc. Advertise your establishment here, including approximately ten words of miscellaneous description, for only $4.25 an issue. You can buy this space in increments of 26 or 52 issues, for $110.50 or $221.00 respectively. Send in your store name, address, phone number, and approximately ten words of description, along with your payment. If you stock *Comics Buyer's Guide* we'll put your listing in boldface type.

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Convention Calendar

The most complete listing of comics events anywhere!

To have your event included, fax your listing to Mary McCarville at ***CBG* Con Calendar,** (715) 445-4087. The e-mail is *mccarvillem@krause.com.*

CALIFORNIA

Jan 31-Feb 2 CA, Pasadena. Comic Book & Pop Culture Convention, Center Exhibition Bldg. 300 E. Green St., SH: 12noon-6pm. Creation Entertainment, PH: 818-409-0960.

Feb 9 CA, Los Angeles. Comic Book & Science Fiction Convention, Shrine Auditorium Expo Ctr. 700 W. 32nd St., SH: 10am-5pm, A: $5. Bruce Schwartz, 2319-A W. Olive Ave., Burbank, CA 91506. PH: 818-954-8432.

CONNECTICUT

Feb 6-8 CT, Danbury. Triple Play Comic Book, Sports Memorabilia, Beanie Babies & Collectible Toy Show, Fair Mall. Rts. 84 & 7, SH: mall hrs., T: 75-8', F: $125.-$175. for 1, $340. for 2, $480. for 3, A: free. F&B Sport Cards, Inc., Ferdinand Parascandolo, 482 Retford Ave., Staten Island, NY 10312. PH: 718-967-9172 or 732-786-8810.

Feb 14-16 CT, Enfield. Collectorfest, Westfield Shoppingtown. I-91 exit 48, T: 60, A: free. Linda Thimell, 169 Elm St., Enfield, CT 06082. PH: 860-749-8702.

Feb 21-23 CT, Trumbull. Comic Book Show, Westfield Shoppingtown. Merritt Pkwy. Rt. 15, exit 48, SH: mall hours, T: 40, F: $180., A: free. Mike Riccio Sports LLC, Mike Riccio, PO Box 162, Botsford, CT 06404. PH: 203-364-1209.

Feb 28-Mar 2 CT, Meriden. Collectorfest, Westfield Shoppingtown. I-691 exit 6, T: 60, SH: mall hours, A: free. Linda Thimell, 169 Elm St., Enfield, CT 06082. PH: 860-749-8702.

Mar 7-9 CT, Enfield. Collectorfest, Westfield Shoppingtown. I-91 exit 48, T: 60, A: free. Linda Thimell, 169 Elm St., Enfield, CT 06082. PH: 860-749-8702.

DELAWARE

Feb 23 DE, Newark. Sports Card, Comic Book & Collectible Show, Aetna Fire Hall. SH: 10:30am-3:30pm, T: 50-8', F: $35. for 1, $60. for 2, A: $2., 12 & under free. Bob Harper, 822 Trophy Way, Bear, DE 19701. PH: 302-438-0967 or 832-3066.

FLORIDA

Feb 2 FL, Tampa. Comic Book & Toy Convention, Holiday Inn Express. 4732 N. Dale Mabry Hwy., SH: 10am-5pm, T: 60, F: $60., A: $3., ages 10 & under free. Tim Gordon, PH: 727-522-9032.

Mar 8-9 FL, Fort Lauderdale. South FL Weekend Spring Con, Pompano Beach Civic Ctr. 1801 NE 6th St., SH: 10am-5pm, T: 100, A: $6., $10. 2-day pass. Charles Cerrito, PH: 954-419-9496 or 224-1162.

ILLINOIS

Feb 8 IL, Orland Park. Comic Books, Cars, Toys & More Show, Civic Center. 147th & LaGrange Rd. (Rt. 45), SH: 9am-2pm, T: 80. John Leary, 9522 W. Shore Dr., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. PH: 708-423-1758.

Feb 16 IL, Peoria. Comic Book Convention, Best Western Signature Inn. 4112 Brandywine Dr., SH: 10am-4pm, A: free. Alan, PH: 309-657-1599

Feb 23 IL, Orland Park. Comic Books, Cars, Toys & More Show, Civic Center. 147th & LaGrange Rd. (Rt. 45), SH: 9am-2pm, T: 80. John Leary, 9522 W. Shore Dr., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. PH: 708-423-1758.

Mar 8 IL, Orland Park. Comic Books, Cars, Toys & More Show, Civic Center. 147th & LaGrange Rd. (Rt. 45), SH: 9am-2pm, T: 80. John Leary, 9522 W. Shore Dr., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. PH: 708-423-1758.

Mar 8-9 IL, Chicago-Rosemont. ComicFest, Ramada Plaza Hotel O'Hare. 6600 N. Mannheim Rd., SH: Sat. 11am-6pm, sun. 11am-5pm, A: $10. daily, $15. 2-day pass, ages 6 & under free. Motor City Conventions, Michael Goldman or Gary Bishop, 19785 W. 12 Mile Rd. PMB 231, Southfield, MI 48076. PH: 248-426-8059.

Mar 9 IL, Springfield. Comic Book Convention, Signature Inn. 3090 Stevenson Dr., SH: 10am-4pm, A: free. Alan, PH: 309-657-1599.

INDIANA

Feb 8-9 IN, Elkhart. Comic Books & Collectibles Show, Pierre Moran Mall. 154 W. Hively Ave., T: 45, F: $65., A: free. Dave Brody, PO Box 724, South Bend, IN 46624. PH: 219-272-9198 or Ken Gaipa, PH: 219-389-9962.

Feb 23 IN, Indianapolis. Comic Book & Collectibles Show, Holiday Inn East. 6990 E. 21st St., SH: 9:30am-3:30pm, T: 70-6', F: $70. for 1, $140. for 3, A: $3. Ash Comics & Shows, Andy Holzman, 1947 Bechtel Rd., Indianapolis, IN 46260. PH: 317-334-0173.

IOWA

Feb 9 IA, Des Moines. Comic Book Convention, Holiday Inn. 5000 Merle Hay Rd. (I-35 & I-80 at Merle Hay), SH: 10am-4pm, A: free. Alan, PH: 309-657-1599.

KANSAS

Feb 8 KS, Shawnee. Comic Book Convention, Park Lanes Family Fun Center. 7701 Renner Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, A: free. Ken, PH: 913-764-8888.

MARYLAND

Mar 2 MD, Gaithersburg. Comic Book, Non-Sports Card & Collectibles Show, Holiday Inn. I-495 to I-270 N. exit 11, Rt. 124 E. to Rt. 355, SH: 10am-4pm, T: 40-6', F: $65., A: $3. Shoff Promos., Nick Shoff, 5904 Willow Knoll Dr., Derwood, MD 20855. PH: 301-990-4929.

MASSACHUSETTS

Feb 16 MA, South Attleboro. Comic Book, Toys, Non-Sports Card & Collectable Show, Knights of Columbus. 304 Highland Ave., Rt. 123, SH: 10am-3pm, T: 59, A: $3., under 16 free. Harry Martin, 936 South St., Wrentham, MA 02093. PH: 508-384-8491.

Feb 23 MA, Boston. Comic Book & Toy Spectacular, Radisson Hotel. Formerly Howard Johnson 57, 200 Stuart St., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 120-8', F: $95., A: $5. Monkey House Entertainment, David Cummings, PH: 978-388-6576.

MICHIGAN

Jan 29 MI, Roseville. Weekly Collectible Comic Book Show, Masonic Hall. Gratiot just N. of 11 Mile (696), SH: 9am-3pm, A: free. J&J Classic Prod., Joseph Pellegrino, PO Box 472, Fraser, MI 48026. PH: 586-775-3289 or 790-6290.

Feb 5 MI, Roseville. Weekly Collectible Comic Book Show, Masonic Hall. Gratiot just N. of 11 Mile (696), SH: 9am-3pm, A: free. J&J Classic Prod., Joseph Pellegrino, PO Box 472, Fraser, MI 48026. PH: 586-775-3289 or 790-6290.

Feb 12 MI, Roseville. Weekly Collectible Comic Book Show, Masonic Hall. Gratiot just N. of 11 Mile (696), SH: 9am-3pm, A: free. J&J Classic Prod., Joseph Pellegrino, PO Box 472, Fraser, MI 48026. PH: 586-775-3289 or 790-6290.

Feb 19 MI, Roseville. Weekly Collectible Comic Book Show, Masonic Hall. Gratiot just N. of 11 Mile (696), SH: 9am-3pm, A: free. J&J Classic Prod., Joseph Pellegrino, PO Box 472, Fraser, MI 48026. PH: 586-775-3289 or 790-6290.

Feb 23 MI, Livonia. X-Trava-Con, Knights of Columbus Hall. 19801 Farmington Rd. (bet. 7 Mile & 8 Mile Rds.), SH: 10am-4pm, T: 45-8', F: $45. in advance, $50. day of show, A: $3., ages 6 & under free. Motor City Conventions, Michael Goldman or Gary Bishop, 19785 W. 12 Mile Rd. PMB 231, Southfield, MI 48076. PH: 248-426-8059.

Feb 26 MI, Roseville. Weekly Collectible Comic Book Show, Masonic Hall. Gratiot just N. of 11 Mile (696), SH: 9am-3pm, A: free. J&J Classic Prod., Joseph Pellegrino, PO Box 472, Fraser, MI 48026. PH: 586-775-3289 or 790-6290.

Mar 5 MI, Roseville. Weekly Collectible Comic Book Show, Masonic Hall. Gratiot just N. of 11 Mile (696), SH: 9am-3pm, A: free. J&J Classic Prod., Joseph Pellegrino, PO Box 472, Fraser, MI 48026. PH: 586-775-3289 or 790-6290.

Mar 12 MI, Roseville. Weekly Collectible Comic Book Show, Masonic Hall. Gratiot just N. of 11 Mile (696), SH: 9am-3pm, A: free. J&J Classic Prod., Joseph Pellegrino, PO Box 472, Fraser, MI 48026. PH: 586-775-3289 or 790-6290.

MISSOURI

Feb 15 MO, Chesterfield. Comic Book Convention, Hampton Inn & Stes. 5 McBride & Son Ctr. Dr., SH: 10am-4pm, A: free. Alan, PH: 309-657-1599.

Feb 23 MO, Shrewsbury. Comic Book Show, Memorial Post Hall Unit 111. 7300 Lansdowne, SH: 10:30am-3pm, T: 40, F: $30., A: $2. Tony Gladish, 4253 Fatima Dr. #3, Saint Louis, MO 63123. PH: 314-544-2812.

NEW JERSEY

Feb 2 NJ, Wayne. Comic Book & Collectibles Show, Co. #1 Firemen's Conv. Ctr. 1 Parish Dr. off Rt. 23 N., Lincoln Park Exit, SH: 8:30am-3pm, T: 80, A: $1, under 12 free. Phil De Mario, PO Box 4094, Wayne, NJ 07474. PH: 973-726-9897.

Feb 9 NJ, Clifton. Comic Book Expo, Community Recreation Ctr. 1232 Main Ave., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 30-6', F: $45., A: free. J. Paul, 10 Cross St., Montclair, NJ 07042. PH: 973-783-0608.

Feb 21-23 NJ, Rockaway. Triple Play Comic Book, Sports Card, Memorabilia & Collectible Toy Show, Townsquare Mall. Rt. 80 & Mount Hope Ave., SH: mall hours, T: 65-8', F: $125.-$175. for 1, $340. for 2, $490. for 3, A: free. F&B Sport Cards, Inc., Ferdinand Parascandolo, 482 Retford Ave., Staten Island, NY 10312. PH: 718-967-9172 or 732-786-8810.

Feb 23 NJ, Wayne. Comic Book Expo, Holiday Inn. Rt. 26, Service Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 30-8', F: $60., A: $2. J. Paul, 10 Cross St., Montclair, NJ 07042. PH: 973-783-0608.

Mar 2 NJ, Wayne. Comic Book & Collectibles Show, Co. #1 Firemen's Conv. Ctr. 1 Parish Dr. off Rt. 23 N., Lincoln Park Exit, SH: 8:30am-3pm, T: 80, A: $1, under 12 free. Phil De Mario, PO Box 4094, Wayne, NJ 07474. PH: 973-726-9897.

Mar 7-9 NJ, Brunswick. Triple Play Comic Book, Sports Card, Memorabilia, & Collectible Toy Show, Brunswick Square Mall. 755 Hwy. 18, SH: mall hrs., T: 100-8', F: $185.-$520., A: free. F&B Promos., Ferdinand Parascandolo, 482 Retford Ave., Staten Island, NY 10312. PH: 718-967-9172 or 732-786-8810.

Mar 8-9 NJ, Newark. Super Megashow & Festival, Airport Sheraton Hotel. 128 Frontage Rd. K&S Promos., 1020 Arlington Rd., New Milford, NJ 07646. PH: 201-261-4982 or 261-8803.

Mar 9 NJ, Clifton. Comic Book Expo, Community Recreation Ctr. 1232 Main Ave., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 30-6', F: $45., A: free. J. Paul, 10 Cross St., Montclair, NJ 07042. PH: 973-783-0608.

NEW YORK

Feb 1-2 NY, Bay Shore. Comic Book & Sports Card Show, Westfield-South Shore Mall. 1701 Sunrise Hwy., SH: Sat. 10am-9:30pm, Sun. 11am-6pm, T: 40-8', F: $125., A: free. Woodwill Corp., Donna Gio, PO Box 5186, Hauppauge, NY 11788. PH: 631-582-6137.

Feb 1 NY, New York City. Collectors Fest Sports Cards, CD's, Records, Tapes, Videos, Mem., Comic Books & More Show, Holy Cross School. 332 W. 43rd St., SH: 10am-5pm, F: $40. for 1, $70. for 2, A: $3. Gary Lyons, PH: 718-972-3872.

Feb 2 NY, Syracuse. Collectorsfest, State Fairgrounds-Horticultural Bldg. State Fair Blvd., Rt. 690 exit 7, SH: 10am-4pm, T: 250-8', A: $3., under 10 free. CNY Promos., 35 Hubbard St. Ste 1, Cortland, NY 13045. PH: 607-753-8580 (eves.).

Feb 8-9 NY, Holbrook. Comic Book, Action Figures & Non-Sports Show, Sunvet Mall. Sunrise Hwy. & Broadway, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 40, F: $55., A: free. Paul DeCarlo, PH: 631-289-7398.

Mar 1 NY, New York City. Collectors Fest Sports Cards, CD's, Records, Tapes, Videos, Mem., Comic Books & More Show, Holy Cross School. 332 W. 43rd St., SH: 10am-5pm, F: $40. for 1, $70. for 2, A: $3. Gary Lyons, PH: 718-972-3872.

NORTH CAROLINA

Feb 8 NC, Charlotte. Comicon, Four Points Sheraton Hotel. 201 S. McDowell St., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 40, F: $60., A: $2. David Hinson, PH: 803-547-3995 or Rick Fortenberry, PH: 704-424-3453.

Feb 22 NC, Statesville. Comic Book, Sports Card & Collectibles Show, Signal Hill Mall. I-77 exit 50, SH: 10am-9pm, T: 60, F: $40., A: free. Mike Dentino, 820 15th Ave. Cir. SE, Hickory, NC 28602. PH: 828-328-1029 or 291-9512.

OHIO

Feb 9 OH, Akron. Comic Con, Tadmor Hall. 3000 Krebs Dr., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 50-6', F: $60., A: $3., 6 & under free. Jeff Harper, 5220 Loma Linda NE, Canton, OH 44714. PH: 330-499-6056.

Mar 2 OH, Columbus. Comic Con, Buckeye Hall of Fame Cafe. 1421 Olentangy River Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 40-6', F: $60., A: $2., 6 & under free. Jeff Harper, 5220 Loma Linda NE, Canton, OH 44714. PH: 330-499-6056.

Mar 9 OH, Cleveland. Saturdays Child Nostalgia Convention, Holiday Inn-Richfield. 4742 Brecksville Rd., SH: 10am-3pm, T: 35-6', F: $55., A: $2., ages 6 & under free. Jeff Harper, 5220 Loma Linda NE, Canton, OH 44714. PH: 330-499-6056.

OREGON

Feb 23 OR, Portland. Comic Book Show #61, Exhibition Hall of Memorial Coliseum. In Rose Quarter Complex, 100 Winning Way, SH: 10am-6pm, T: 165, F: $85, A: $6. Second Genesis Ltd., 5532 SE Center St. Ste. 1, Portland, OR 97206. PH: 503-788-1031.

PENNSYLVANIA

Feb 23 PA, Pittsburgh. 3 Rivers Comic Book & Sci-Fi Conv., Al Monzo's Palace Inn. I-376 E. at Old Haymaker Rd. (Rt. 48), PA Tpke. at exit 6, t. 22 & Rt. 48, SH: 10am-3pm, T: 40-8', F: $55., A: $2., ages 6 & under free. Jeff Harper, 5220 Loma Linda NE, Canton, OH 44714. PH: 330-499-6056.

Mar 8 PA, Allentown. Adventure Con 2003, Merchant Square Mall. 1901 S. 12th St., I-78 exit 57 (Lehigh St.), SH: 10am-5pm, T: 130-8', F: $45., A: $3., under 10 free. Tigerlou Prod., Angelo, PO Box 596, Lebanon, NJ 08833. PH: 908-638-6608.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Mar 1 SC, Columbia. 5th Annual Comic Book, Toy, Doll & Coll. Show, Jamil Temple. St. Andrews Rd. at I-26, SH: 10am-4pm. Mark, PH: 803-358-0444 eves.

TENNESSEE

Feb 9 TN, Clarksville. Comic Book Collectable Show, Holiday Inn. I-24 & Hwy. 79, SH: 9am-5pm, T: 60, F: $30., A: free. Jack E. Thomas, PH: 931-648-9799 or 302-6702.

Mar 7-9 TN, Morristown. Comic Book, Sports Card, Toy & NASCAR Show, College Square Mall. 2550 E. Morris Blvd., SH: mall hours, T: 50-8', F: $95., A: free. Bill Henderson, 346 Fuller Estate Cir., Morristown, TN 37813. PH: 423-581-8386.

TEXAS

Feb 9 TX, Killeen. Comic Book, Sports Card & Toy Show, Howard Johnson Inn. 803 E. Central TX Expy., SH: 10am-5pm, T: 50-6', F: $40., A: $2. JMV Entertainment, PO Box 151, Temple, TX 76503. PH: 254-760-8682 or 771-4238.

Mar 1-2 TX, Austin. Collectors Expo, Crockett Ctr. 6301 Hwy. 290 E., SH: Sat. 9am-5pm, Sun. 10am-4pm, A: $3. good for both days, under 6 free. Sally Wallace, 6702 Lexington Rd., Austin, TX 78757. PH: 512-454-9882.

Mar 9 TX, Killeen. Comic Book, Sports Card & Toy Show, Howard Johnson Inn. 803 E. Central TX Expy., SH: 10am-5pm, T: 50-6', F: $40., A: $2. JMV Entertainment, PO Box 151, Temple, TX 76503. PH: 254-760-8682 or 771-4238.

VIRGINIA

Feb 2 VA, Tysons Corner. Comic Book, Nonsports Card & Collectibles Show, Doubletree Hotel. I-495 exit 47-B (Rt. 7), SH: 10am-4pm, T: 50-6', F: $65., A: $3. Shoff Promos., Nick Shoff, 5904 Willow Knoll Dr., Derwood, MD 20855. PH: 301-990-4929.

Feb 7-9 VA, Newport News. Sports Cards, Comic Book & Toy Show, Patrick Henry Mall. Jefferson Ave., SH: Fri. & Sat. 10am-9pm, Sun. 12:30pm-5:30pm, T: 40-8', A: free. Space Travelers Comics & Promos., Tom, PO Box 1446, Harrisonburg, VA 22803. PH: 540-432-6771.

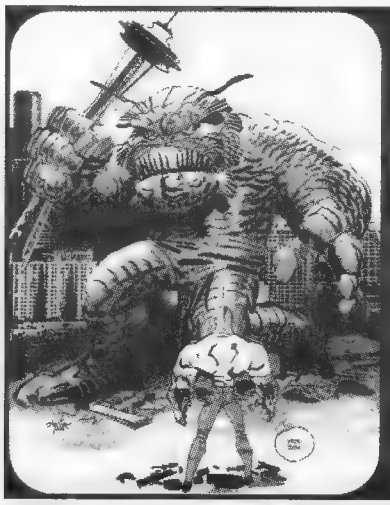
Feb 9 2003 VA, Richmond. CCCC Winter Show, Holiday Inn Crossroads. 2000 Staples Mill Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 34-6', F: $60., A: $2. Chesterfield Comic Collectors, Guy Rose, 6413 Old Bern Rd., Chesterfield, VA 23832. PH: 804-796-4903 or 274-7388.

WASHINGTON

Feb 9 WA, Seattle. Emerald City ComiCon, Seattle Seahawks Stadium-West Field Plaza. 800 Occidental Ave. S., SH: 10am-6pm, T: 100, F: $85., A: $8. Jim Demonakos, 333 184th St. SW Ste. U, Lynnwood, WA 98037. PH: 425-418-8886.

WISCONSIN

Feb 2 WI, West Allis. Comic Book Convention, Burnham Bowl. 6016 W. Burnham Ave., SH: 11am-4pm. Clayton Dietl, PH: 414-328-3675.



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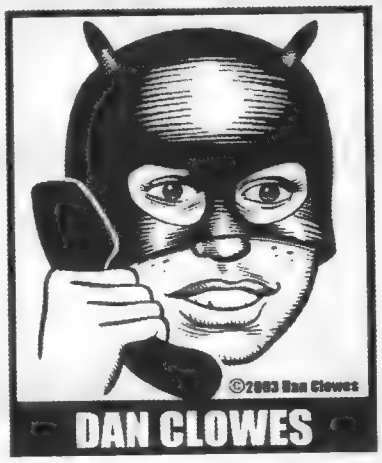

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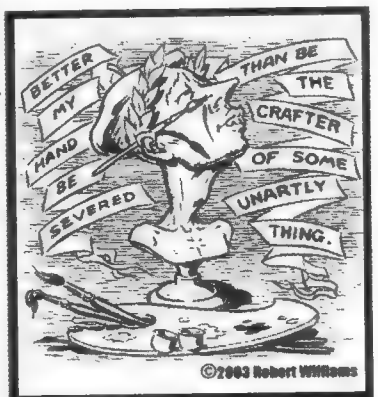

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By **Peter David**

There are some who maintain that "fan" is short for "fanatic," with all the negative connotations that word carries. Fanatical, obsessive to the point of losing all touch with reality, from the Latin "fanaticus," meaning inspired by a deity. Fanatics are the ones who fly airplanes into buildings or become stalkers, their once-hobbies becoming the subject of murderous rage if the object of their desire is denied them. So more sane people aren't sanguine about carrying a label that is simply a shortened form of an unsavory designation.

Then, there are others who say that "fan" is actually short for "fancier" — someone who is more of an aesthete. Who appreciates the fine points of his or her particular interest without ever going off the deep end. The Philadelphia Phillies have fanatics. Cats have fanciers. Smashing Pumpkins has fanatics. Orchids have fanciers. So if one's basic "fan" nature stems from a fancier of art, writing, and storytelling, there's no implied threat. No lurking shadow that hints at possible catastrophes to come.

In the movies recently, comic-book fans have been taking a shellacking, with the "fan" tipping much more closely to the fanatic side of the street.

Let us first consider *Catch Me if You Can,* the based-on-truth story of Frank Abagnale (Leonardo DiCaprio), con man and forger who pretended to be an airline pilot, an ER surgeon, and an attorney, all before he was old enough to vote.

Jeff Nathanson's screenplay (which Steven Spielberg does an excellent job of directing, mostly by staying out of the story's way) gives us a youthful Abagnale who is a fascinating paradox. With his parents' marriage falling apart, Abagnale runs from reality and into a world that he creates for himself. In his world, the only problem with his parents' marriage is lack of money. If they have money, then all the difficulties will solve themselves and they'll be able to be a family once more.

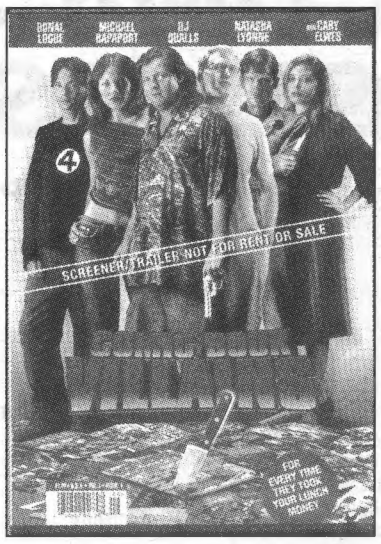
Blinding himself to deeper problems (such as that his father is a lousy businessman and penny ante loser), Abagnale sets out to make as much money as possible, apparently having never heard that money can't buy happiness. He does this by flimflamming everyone he comes into contact with, forging careers and forging checks. Of course, while he's busy deluding people into thinking he's an airline pilot hopping free flights, he himself continues to live in perpetual self-delusion, writing upbeat letters to his father and talking about how they're going to be a family once more.

And what's the most obvious outward manifestation that Frank is someone capable of living in a fantasy world construct in which he's a lawyer or doctor and his parents' marriage is salvageable?

He's a comic-book fan.

As a matter of fact, comics so thoroughly contribute to his mindset that they even trip him up. At one point he introduces himself to his pursuer, FBI agent Carl Hanratty (Tom Hanks, playing a supporting role!), as "Barry Allen." The name means nothing to Hanratty — until later, when he's in a café, studying Abagnale's repeated use of the name "Barry Allen" and is asked by a soda jerk if he, Hanratty, is a collector. The bewildered Hanratty is informed that "Barry Allen" is the alter ego of The Flash.

This is a major revelation to Hanratty, who informs the FBI that their quarry is not an adult. How does he know? "*He reads comic books! He's a kid! We're looking for a kid,*" declares Hanratty, who then immediately starts checking out runaway juveniles and gets his first big break in the case. Yes, in the early 1960s, the notion that adults might read comics was so alien that Hanratty never even stopped to consider it — probably because any adult reading comic books would have to be a functional moron, right? And Abagnale was smart. Therefore, he was a kid. Q.E.D.



From the exciting world that fantasy-obsessed Frank Abagnale created for himself, we slide into an even darker world of fanaticism, as we visit the world of *Comic Book Villains.* This film slid totally beneath my radar when it first came out in 2002, but it's on cable and out on video now. Written and directed by James Dale Robinson (whom one source lists as the writer for the upcoming *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* film and who attracted comics fans' attention with his work on DC's *Starman*), *Comic Book Villains* tells the story of the owners of two comic-book stores: the uberfannish Raymond (Donal Logue) and his crosstown married competitors Judy and Norman (Natasha Lyonne and *Boston Public's* Michael Rapaport). They are inspired (or perhaps fiendishly manipulated) into competition for a staggeringly valuable collection of comics dating back to the Golden Age, in the possession of the elderly Mrs. Cresswell (a wistful Eileen Brennan) who refuses to sell, since it belonged to her late son.

In *Comic Book Villains,* we see a brilliantly constructed cross-section of comic-book fans. They run the gamut here: Ray is a dazzling expert on all things comics-related, able to call up the most arcane knowledge in a heartbeat. Yet, when it comes to fairly routine real-world trivia, he's clueless (for instance, believing the name of the city where the bulls run is Paloma rather than Pamplona). He wants the comics for personal fame, uncaring of fortune, and also for the pure love of the comics. Norm and Judy (who run what Ray disdainfully refers to as an "action figure" store) merely have dollar signs in their eyes. (Judy, reading the *Price Guide*, literally has a vision of comics accompanied by dollars descending from heaven.)

There is also J.C. (a surprisingly villainous Cary Elwes) as the Dr. Wertham poster boy: the former juvenile delinquent who read comics when he was a kid. When he's brought in late in the game, the comics are, to him, a symbol of what might have been a more innocent time for him, provided he had ever had any innocence in the first place. And through all these extremes wanders the aptly named Archie (DJ Qualls, who could easily play Peter Parker, if Tobey Maguire wants to get out of his contract). Archie is a comics fan in the process of outgrowing the fantasy world they present. His interest in the collection is purely from the standpoint of being Ray's friend, but — thanks to the old woman — he finds himself becoming more and more interested in the "real world" via the writings of, for instance, Hemingway.

To Archie, comics are a diversion, an interest, something to be appreciated and enjoyed for both their strengths and their weaknesses.

In short, among the comics fanatics, he is a fancier. This becomes more and more important to his personal salvation, as the stakes are constantly upped through the progression of the story. What starts as an unfriendly rivalry to gain the old woman's favor becomes increasingly volatile and, eventually, deadly. In 93 brisk minutes, we see the dangers inherent in losing sight of such fundamental concepts as humanity in favor of a four-color world chock-full of moralistic simplicity.

Just as *The Player* prompted a lot of people in Hollywood to feel unclean after seeing it, *Comic Book Villains'* nearly unrelentingly cynical view of comics fans may prompt a number of viewers to want to take a long hot shower afterward — or, perhaps, examine their hands carefully to see if there's any blood on them. ✦

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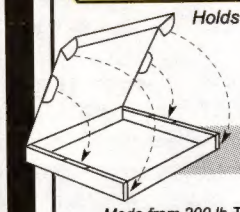

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	KAF28R	Intermediate	0.028	6.50	11.60	18.15	73.30	129.25
	KAF40R	Superior	0.040	11.35	21.00	36.65	159.20	277.00
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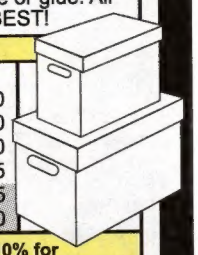

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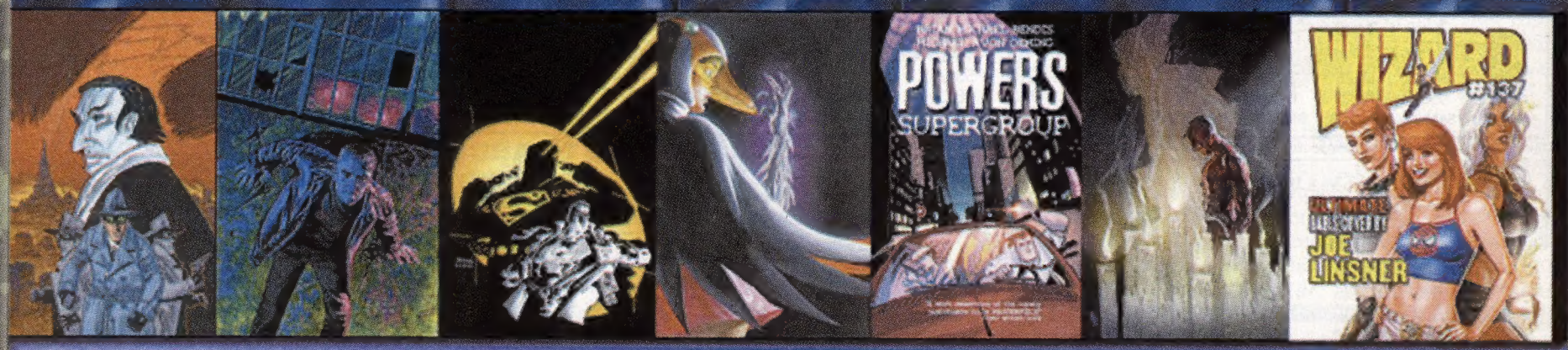

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